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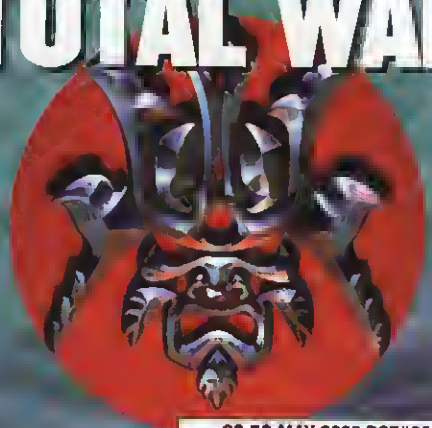
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DEFINITIVE REVIEWS

- FORCE COMMANDER
- SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
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MASSIVE 6 PAGE REVIEW

SHOGUN TOTAL WAR



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TINY COMPO: What does the acronym IGI stand for?

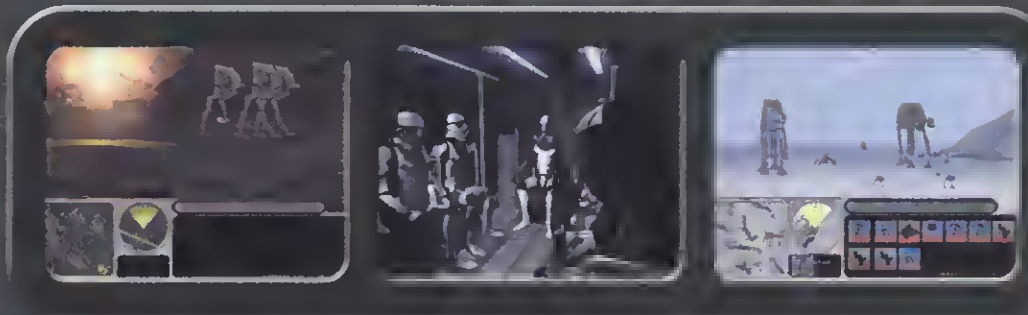
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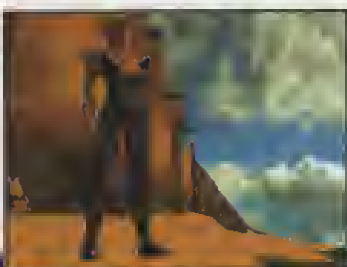
WIN THE
TOP 10
PC GAMES
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS
PAGE 30



66 SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR Our massive review of this superb and epic real-time strategy. We knew it was going to be good, but we weren't expecting such a classic.



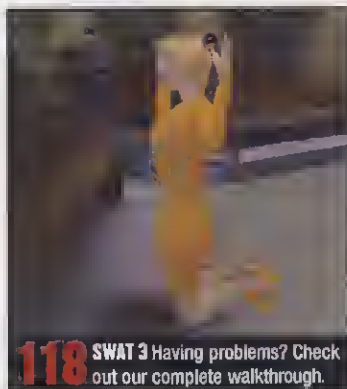
18 OBI-WAN Forget about flying to New York. Get all the info you need here.



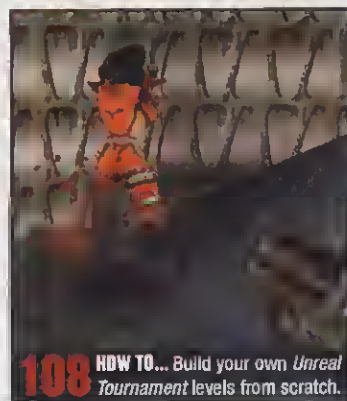
78 ULTIMA ASCENSION First review of the final UK version. Is it any good?



50 DUNGEDN SIEGE The best-looking action RPG in the world. Ever.



118 SWAT 3 Having problems? Check out our complete walkthrough.



108 HDW TO... Build your own *Unreal Tournament* levels from scratch.

PCZ CONTENTS

PREVIEWS

We take a look at the games you're going to be playing later this year

- 46 PRDJECT ICI**
Fancy yourself as a Bond-style hero? *Project IGI* lets you go all the way
- 50 DUNCEON SIEGE**
The best-looking action RPG we've seen. And it may well knock *Diablo II* for six
- 52 MDK 2**
Murder, death, kill? Forget the acronym and lap up the new screenshots
- 54 X-COM: ALLIANCE**
First-person action in the *X-COM* world
- 57 ARCANUM: OF STEAMWORKS AND MAGIC OBSCURA**
A new mouthful from the *Fallout* team
- 58 INSANE**
Crazy online racing from Codemasters
- 61 WARLORDS: BATTLECRY**
The *Warlords* series goes real time
- 62 COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2**
Go back in time with this ace WWII sim

REVIEWS

The most definitive reviews section around. All the latest and greatest PC games (and, of course, some of the worst) come under the cynical *PC ZONE* microscope. This is the place to come before shelling out on that new game you've got your eye on

NEW GAMES

- 66 SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR**
- 72 CDMANCHE HDKUM**
- 74 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**
- 76 JANE'S F/A-1B**
- 78 ULTIMA ASCENSION**
- 81 EVOLVA**
- 82 ROLLBACK: STAGE II**
- 84 RALLY MASTERS**
- 87 ONE HARD TRILDCY II**
- 88 FORCE COMMANDER**
- 90 DEMOLITION RACER**

90 BEETLE CRAZY CUP

- 91 MAJESTY**
- 91 ALIEN NATIONS**
- 92 DEMISE: RISE OF THE KU'TAN**
- 92 HAZARD**
- 92 INVICTUS**
- 93 GIANT KILLERS**
- 93 STEPHEN KING'S F13**
- 93 WILD WILD WEST**

BUDGET REVIEWS

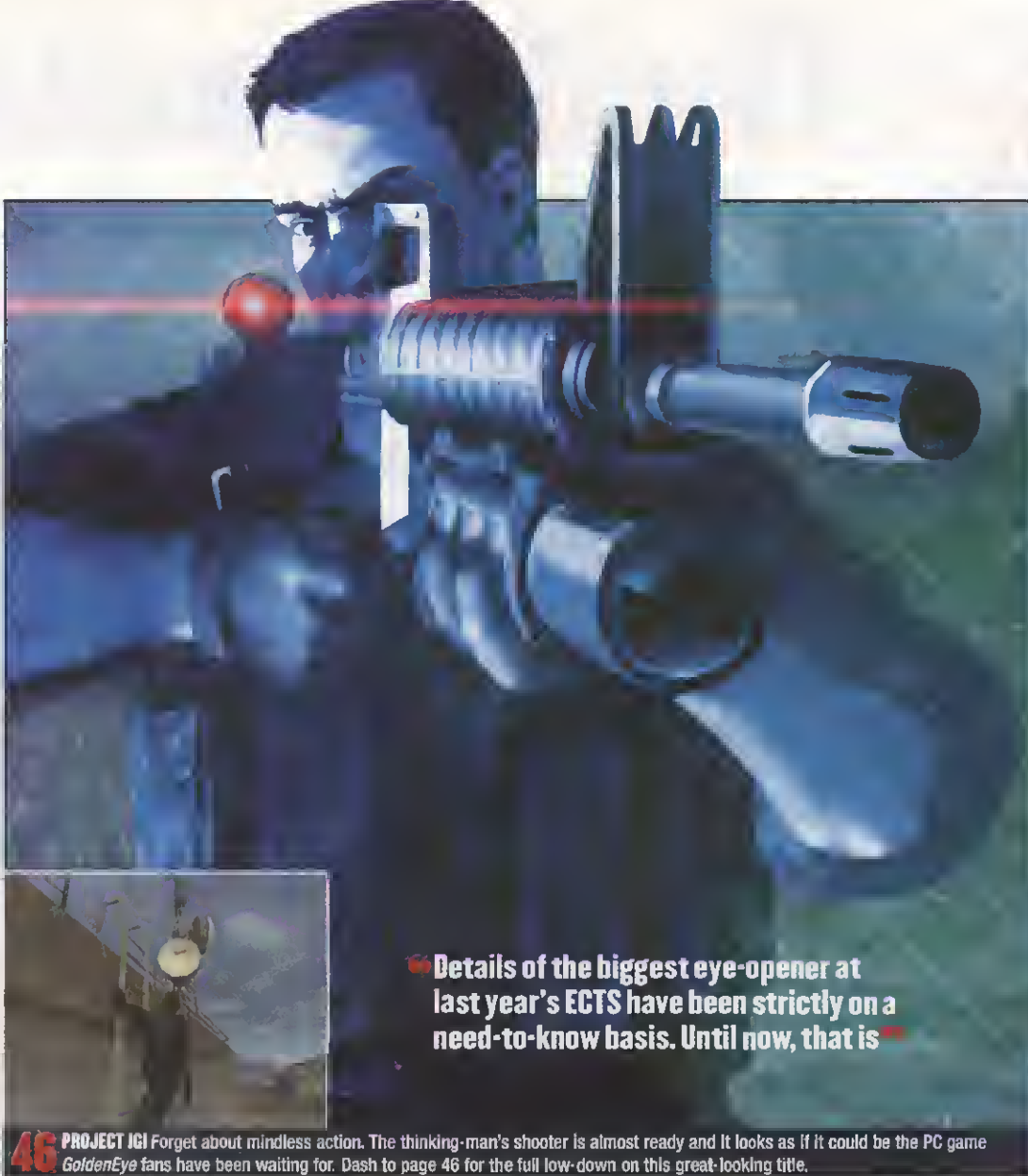
- 102 COMMANDOS**
- 102 WARZONE 2100**
- 102 GRAND PRIX LEGENDS**
- 103 CTA LONDON**
- 103 SPEEDBALL 2**
- 103 SPACE QUEST IV**
- 103 CYBER CLADIATORS**
- 103 ARMOR COMMANDO**

SUPERTEST

- 94 TURN-BASED STRATEGY**
Our critical experts take it in turns and speak in an orderly fashion about the best turn-based strategies on the PC

READERS' REVIEWS

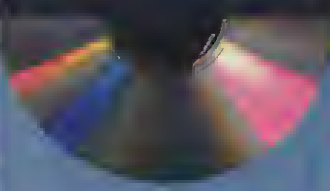
- 105 FEEDBACK**
Your views on *Delta Force 2*, *The Sims* and *Planescape: Torment*. Oh, and a couple of obscure titles: *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III*. Will the debate never end?



Details of the biggest eye-opener at last year's ECTS have been strictly on a need-to-know basis. Until now, that is

46 PROJECT IGI Forget about mindless action. The thinking-man's shooter is almost ready and it looks as if it could be the PC game *GoldenEye* fans have been waiting for. Dash to page 46 for the full low-down on this great-looking title.

ON THE CDs



FULL DETAILS
PAGE 149

DON'T MISS
EXCLUSIVE
DEMOS OF:

**HALF LIFE: OPPOSING
FORCE**
**KLINGON ACADEMY
PLAYER MANAGER
2000**
EVOLVA

As well as these exciting exclusives, we've got the finest selection of demos, patches and utilities currently available. *Majesty*, *Demolition Racer* and *Star Shatter*, along with a playable level from *Tomb Raider 3*, and a full track from *Test Drive 6.0* - and before we forget, you can stock up on all the latest levels for our favourite shooter, *Unreal Tournament*. We're just too good to you.

BULLETIN

Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

16-43 BULLETIN

Gaming news from all over the planet. It's worth knowing, we'll tell you

16 TOP STORIES

News on the games you're going to be buying in the future. *Obi-Wan*, *The World Is Not Enough* and the return of our favourite racer in *Midtown Madness 2*

28 TECH-HEAD

The latest hardware news and more

30 THE PC ZONE CHARTS

Current and past PC game charts, and the chance to win the Top 10 games

33 ONLINE DIARY

The latest Internet gaming news

42 HOTSHOTS

Deus Ex is nearly here and we've got the exclusive screenshots to prove it

REGULARS

Lots of stuff about stuff, or something

13 MAILBOX

Go on - get it off your chest. Write a letter to the Editor and if you're really lucky you might win a Microsoft IntelliMouse

130 SUBSCRIBE

Save money and get *PC ZONE* delivered

140 PCZ TOP 100

We've revamped and rescored all the games in our Top 100 - just for you

149 ON THE GO

As well as the latest playable demos and patches, we have four exclusives for you this month, including *Half Life: Opposing Force* and *Klingon Academy*

156 WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Readers reveal their innermost secrets to *PC ZONE*

TROUBLESHOOTER

The most extensive and comprehensive tips section in town

116 CHEATMASTER

Having trouble completing your favourite games? Let Keith Pullin be your guide

118 SWAT 3

The full walkthrough for this superb thinker-shooter

122 FINAL FANTASY VIII

Our guide to the latest epic from SquareSoft. You can do it...

126 OEAR WANJOY

He speaks binary, don'tcha know

128 WATCHOOG

Got a gripe about a game or a publisher? Have a cry on Adam Phillips' shoulder

END ZONE

Just when you thought the mag had ended... blimey, a whole lot more!

154 EXTENDED PLAY

Unreal Tournament is still our shooter of choice, and we've spent the last month scouring the world for the best new levels. Try your hand at the latest *Deathmatch*, *Capture The Flag* and *Assault* creations

158 THE WORLO ACCORRING TO...

The Bullfrog boys spill the beans about the past, the future and life inside the corporate machine we know as *Electronic Arts*

162 COMMENT

Steve Hill reckons you should all be happy with what you've got

WIN! **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to **The Compo No One Finds (89), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7LJ**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday 4 May 2000. The winner of our March (#87) cover compo was Steve Renshaw from Surrey, who was something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer (Garrett) to our last little teaser



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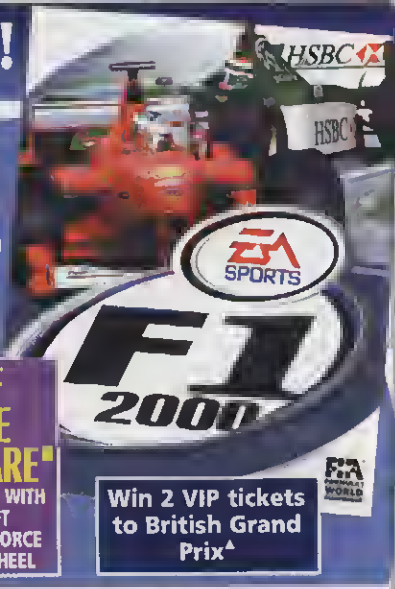
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IT'S A CLASSIC!

It's taken five months under the new ZONE scoring system for a game to reach PC ZONE 'Classic' status, but the wait is finally over. *Shogun* (see review on page 66) is the first game we have seen that we consider to be revolutionary in its genre and, as such, it is a shining example of what we really expect from a game that wins this most coveted of accolades. Here is a game that looks deceptively simplistic at first glance, but on extended play proves to have depth to rival even the most complex of turn-based games. *Shogun* also represents a refreshingly non-linear approach to the RTS genre, with players tasked with gaining territorial control over a whole country, region by region, instead of

plodding laboriously from one mission to the next, and it also contains some of the most epic and spectacular battles ever seen on the small screen.

Put simply, *Shogun* has injected a much-needed shot of originality into what has become a very staid genre of late (*Tiberian Sun* is living proof of this in many ways). This makes *Shogun* our new benchmark title for the real-time strategy genre from next month, and this is the game that all new RTS titles will be judged against.

It's worth mentioning at this point that while we have had no other 'Classics' recently, there have been games that have come very close to redefining their respective genres. *The Sims*, for example,

(which is really in a genre of its own to start with) had some innovative ideas, but it was somewhat flawed in execution in key areas. *Planescape: Torment* was another contender for 'Classic' status. It is without doubt the best role-playing game available on PC, but it is also fair to say it didn't really break any new ground, and in that respect was more evolutionary than revolutionary. Both these titles prove beyond doubt that a game does not have to reach 'Classic' status to be an excellent example of its genre.

Best of luck, enjoy the issue and I'll see you all again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

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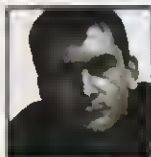
All PC ZONE's reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to writers who are fans of the genre



CHRIS ANDERSON

Why would you make a good secret agent?

I always wear black. Undercover supremo, that's me.



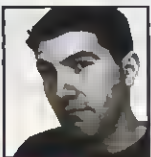
DAVE WOODS

Because I'm the master of the spontaneous and witty one liners.



RICHE SHOEMAKER

I drink Martinis and I'm rather good with the ladies.



MARK HILL

Because everyone ignores me, rendering me almost invisible to the human eye.



MARTIN KORDA

I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you.



PAUL MALLINSON

I lie a lot.

What would be your moniker, and why?

The Deadly Chrisola. I am dangerous, believe it.

I can't think of anything, can you get back to me on that one.

Sad Boy.

Codename: DId Someone Say Something?

See answer one.

Secret Agent Mallinson. The spy w/ nowt taken out.



CHARLIE BROOKER

Why would you make a good secret agent?

Because I always carry a concealed weapon about my person.



STEVE HILL

'Cos I'm silent and deadly.



PAUL PRESLEY

I know everything there is to know about espionage and undercover infiltration. I saw *Octopussy* twice.



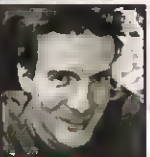
ANDREW WRIGHT

I wouldn't because I'm always ill.



KEITH PULLIN

That's obvious, I'm always Pullin.



PHIL WAND

I am a secret agent. QED.

What would be your moniker and why?

Face Stabbing Mike, because I often stab people in the face, and my name is Mike.

Arse Gas. Work it out.

Red Sloth.

The Spy Who Came In With a Cold.

The Flasher. It's to do with secret codes, but it's far too complicated to explain.

Up Yours. Because it's abusive and likely to start a fight.

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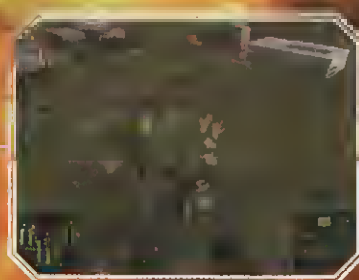
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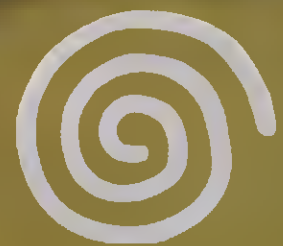
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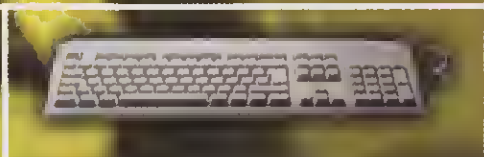
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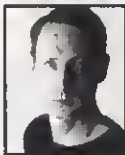
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MAILBOX



Pants are cool, girls like games, 3D cards are not cool, guys like games too. It's all happening in this month's wacky Mailbox

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

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CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

HEAVENLY TORMENT

As much as I would like to distance myself from the title, at 27, I must go under the heading of mature gamer. What does the tag mean? It probably classifies many readers, like myself, who are completely fed up with games, but keep playing them in the hope that a gem will slip through now and again.

Of course, being old, I'm set in my ways. I play the same games I did when I was 17: sports sims, action games, even the games I was playing when I was seven, such as football, tennis and breakout on my grandstand. Recently, though, I had what alcoholics call a 'moment of clarity' and realised I wasn't playing games for fun any more, but more as a force of habit.

So why does this letter wind up on your desk? Well, I recently went against everything I have ever enjoyed in gaming and, after reading your review and subsequent most played monthly game, I purchased *Planescape: Torment*. What a game! It has completely restored my faith in gaming and - more so - in myself. I forced myself to try a genre that didn't really appeal to me, in the vain hope of amusing myself again.

So fellow oldies, throw away your sticks and give something different a try. I'm not saying games like *Planescape* will be everyone's cup of tea, but it's worth a shot. Thanks PC ZONE - your guy's persistence has paid off and I'm gaming again. Everyone wins, except the wife of course - who is mad again at playing second fiddle.

Mark Brooks

Any game the ZONE staff raves about is always worth checking out, no matter what sort of games you



Planescape: Torment - winning new fans for the RPG genre.

normally play. *Planescape* is a good example but, generally speaking, if a game stays on our playlist for months on end, there is a good reason for it.

CARD GAMES

First of all I would like to say how excellent your magazine is - I buy it every month. Keep up the good work. Anyway... I have a couple of points to make. The first is: do you think that developers are pushing the PC to its limits? I know that they don't

want to take the risk with a high-spec game in case people are put off by the fact that you will need a PIII 500 just to run it and the latest 3D card, but my point is that a lot of people (myself included) have fairly high-spec machines, and if they are serious about gaming their machines will comply with the standard. It seems to me that modern games are not using the power of 3D cards to their full potential, and I have seen little improvement over the past

year in technology in games, even though the latest cards are capable of amazing things. I own a Matrox G400; I know it is not the latest card, but I have seen hardly any games that utilise its full potential, with the likes of bump mapping and proper 32-bit textures. I did not buy this card to run games that don't use its technology. I am waiting to buy a Voodoo 6000 when it comes out, but will there be any point if games won't use it fully? One prime example is *Daikatana*,

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of PC ZONE, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device - you can even use them with Windows 98 if you really want to.

So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.

You too can own a Microsoft IntelliMouse. Simply send a vaguely intelligent/interesting letter to Mailbox and, if it gets printed, we'll send you one.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH

Just have to know: I was looking at page 8 of your last issue (great issue apart from the rather sparse cover disc for us poor few who don't have *Unreal Tourney*) and Adam Phillips' face caught my eye. After looking at it for a minute I could swear that it's *Star Trek Voyager's* (how-sad-am-I?) Neelix, minus make-up. If memory serves, the actor who plays Neelix is Ethan Phillips. Ethan Phillips... Adam Phillips: too much of a coincidence? I just have to know - are they brothers or something? If so, do I get a prize for spotting this? :)

J Lawrence F



Adam Phillips is Neelix. Possibly.

“Thanks PC ZONE. I'm gaming again and everyone wins, except the wife of course - who is mad again at playing second fiddle”

PLANESCAPE BRINGS JOY TO MARK BROOKS (AND WOE TO HIS MISUSS)

an eternity in the making and still using the *Quake II* engine! I know you will come back to me and say that it's the playability that matters, which it does, but being encouraged to buy the latest processors and 3D cards and finding out that games don't use them properly is just a waste of time.

On another note, people are complaining about having to use a patch to solve bugs in games, but do they ever think about the poor sods who develop the games? With millions of lines of code, there is bound to be a bug in there somewhere, after all we are only human. A lot of man hours and hard work goes into games, even if they end up being rubbish. So please people, think about it from the programmers' point of view. Another thing is that if they do have to release a patch, in order to make it, they have to sift through all the code and put it right - that means even more time is being used on our behalf so we can enjoy the game.

Anyway, I have had my rant and feel very much better now.

Daniel Vickers

★ New 3D cards bring increased frame-rates and performance, so you have not wasted your time buying the Matrox card. But if you want to play games that utilise the latest 3D cards to the full, you should hold out for a while and wait for developers to catch up with the cards available instead of buying the latest 'new thing' as soon as it hits the shelves. As for the bugs problem: well, I think the problem most people have is with finished games that are unplayable and need patches before they work properly. We all understand that no game is going to be perfect on release, but you have to draw the line somewhere, and people are perfectly entitled to complain if they pay good money for finished product which is unacceptably bugged.

GIRL POWER (AGAIN)

In common with Jenna of Norwich (PCZ #87), I find your noswervingly patronising attitude towards

females irritating in the extreme. I know more about the games in my local computer shop than the (male) staff, as I spend most of my spare time playing them. In addition, male friends usually come to me when they want their cool new graphics card installed and their machine has gone west, as I am more at home inside a computer than most of them. It's not a matter of companies providing 'games for girls'. I don't want to dress Barbie dolls, thanks very much; if the games are of sufficient quality, then I and other women will buy and play them. Maybe we are just more discriminating?

"It's not a matter of companies providing 'games for girls'. I don't want to dress Barbie dolls; if the games are of sufficient quality, then I and other women buy them"

ALISON BAKER RECKONS TAILOR-MADE GAMES FOR GIRLS SUCK

By the way, one of the most avid gamers I know is my 67-year-old mother....

Alison Baker, Colchester

★ Every time I get a letter like this from a disgruntled girl gamer I ask her to submit a review for consideration - and every time, without fail, I get no response. So, Jenna, do you want to be the first female to submit a review to PC ZONE? We are throwing down the gauntlet here (Ooh, this is exciting - a ZONE reader). Write 300 words on a recent game and email it to us and the rest, as they say, might be history, but possibly not.

COOL TO BE SQUARE?

I'd just like to say, first of all, that I love your mag. But the main reason that I am writing in is to tell you how I feel about Squaresoft. Although I think that they are an ingenious company who produce brilliant software titles, such as *FFVII* and *FFVIII*, why can't they develop the PC version of the game while the PlayStation version is also in development?

Why do they have to leave us PC gamers with what looks like a practically half-finished game? They could really use the power of the PC to their advantage. Why couldn't they

have included support for the mouse on the menu screens? And why do we have to be the ones to wait a couple more months for it to be released on the PC? Little things like this would have made the world of difference to both games.

I know that *FFVII* didn't sell as well as it could have on the PC, but I think that if Squaresoft had actually made it a PC game and not just what looked like a cheap port of the PlayStation version, it probably would have sold much better.

Please Squaresoft, when you are making *FFIX*, take a hint and don't let us be the ones to suit out.

Jonny M, Sunderland

Oh, and if you need my details, my name is Jonathan Merritt.

★ We couldn't agree more, Jonathan. *FFVIII* was clearly a direct port of the PlayStation version of the game (although thankfully the graphics are much better on PC this time round, which wasn't the case with *FFVII*). I really don't know what made Squaresoft think that navigating game menus with a keyboard or joystick would be more intuitive than using a mouse. To be honest, its games are aimed squarely (no pun intended) at the Japanese market, so hopes are not high that this will change in future Squaresoft releases on PC. [P]

LETTER OF THE MONTH

LOVER OF PANTS

I notice that in the latest issue you have a new category: PC ZONE PANTS. Why is it that people use the term 'That was pants', to denote that something wasn't very good, and yet those same people scuttle off to Marks & Spencer and spend a fortune on pants. If pants were a bad thing why do people bother wearing them, especially as most people's are only seen on washing lines or by very close friends and yet people insist on spending a lot of money on nice ones, with Calvin Klein written on the waistband or little lacy bows on the front with a double-stitched gusset (depending on gender - in most cases), so why use the term pants as a negative comment?

On the other hand, the expression 'The Dog's Bollocks' is deemed as a positive comment. Call me old-fashioned, call me a sentimental fool, but I would rather see a ladies pair of pants than a dog's bollocks. In fact, most people wouldn't go anywhere near a pair of dog's bollocks (apart from a vet, dog breeders and strange, twisted, lonely people at obscurely named websites, or in fact the dog himself), yet those same people will spend most of their lives trying to get inside someone else's pants, as well as their own.

So let's change these outdated terms around. From now on Pants=Good, Dog's Bollocks=Bad.

PS. Incidentally, when I say 'bad' I mean 'not good'. Not in the Michael Jackson sense of the word. To think I spent all that time denying I was bad when confronted by angry teachers all those years ago at school. Along comes some demented man/child with a penchant for young boys and an aversion to his own race and my whole life is turned upside down.

A Garrard

★ A fair and valid point, although there is something inherently insulting about the term 'pants' that we find endearing. But we are considering a change of insult for games that score 20 per cent or below. Here then, is an open invitation to ZONE readers to come up with a special PC ZONE award for games that are unspeakably bad. We'll use the best one in the mag, and whoever sends it in will probably, quite possibly, win a prize (in addition to the mouse). Email your suggestions to me, and make sure they are insulting and totally hilarious.



★ Pants - there's nothing wrong with them says A Garrard.





“... A GAME OF EPIC PROPORTIONS
...THE GRAPHICS ARE SUPERB...”

DREAMCAST MONTHLY 8/10

“...A TOP ARCADE TITLE,
WITH STORMING ACTION...”

PC GAMER 82%

SOMETHING BIG IS ABOUT TO HIT THE STREETS



SLAVE ZERO

THE NEXT BIG THING

16 CITY-SPANNING MISSIONS, CAR CRUSHING, ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION,
RAGING 3D GRAPHICS AND SOUND, BATTLE READY MULTIPLAY MODES



TOP STORY



Winners take shortcuts.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO DRIVE HERE

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Angel Studios

PUBLISHER Microsoft

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Autumn 2000

WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/games

IN SUMMARY

Drive a variety of vehicles around the streets of London and San Francisco pretending to be a stunt driver or a cabby. Smash everything else out of the way. *Capisco?*

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The original won our arcade driving Supertest and we reckon it's still the most fun you can have with a force feedback steering wheel. The sequel is providing us with the whole of London just to smash to pieces. And that is a big deal.

MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

What's the capital of England? And our favourite arcade driving game? Put the two together and get ready for the return of the daddy

★ **TURNING THE WHEEL** Dave Woods



Warning, Brits abroad – lock up your lager.



Pretty good parking for a lady.



Expect to see more traffic in the finished game.



No London shots yet, but the hills and jumps of San Francisco look pretty cool.



Shut your eyes and hope for the best.

We love *Midtown Madness*, especially in multiplayer mode, so the prospect of a sequel had us salivating with anticipation. When we heard that the developer is including two new cities to trash we were verging on the orgasmic. And then, after news filtered through that London is going to be one of the two new sites, our actions were unprintable.

MM2 is one of the games we saw at the recent Microsoft extravaganza, Gamestock, but although it's scheduled for an Autumn release there wasn't really much of the game in place, and disappointingly our capital city was nowhere to be seen. Thankfully, talking to the developers left us in no doubt that the sequel is going to take the mantle from its predecessor and provide as much fun as you can have with a force feedback wheel strapped to your desk.

If you've played the original, then there are two big surprises waiting for you in the sequel. The first is a Crash Course Mission mode, where you can choose to play as a stunt driver on location in the latest action thriller in San Francisco (the second of the two new cities), or as a rookie cab driver trying to grasp the knowledge on the streets of London. (Wonder where they got the idea for that one? *Crazy Taxi?* Hmm.)

And, as well as offering nine new vehicles (including the Aston Martin

including all the vehicles, the drive-anywhere philosophy and the race modes. The promise of improved multiplayer support across a LAN and the Internet is an essential bonus and should ensure an even bigger following this time round.

“By far the best news for UK gamers is the inclusion of London. If you've ever tried to negotiate the Hyde Park roundabout, then this game is an essential purchase”

Vantage DB-7 and a huge great fire engine), the driving physics and damage modelling have been improved to allow racing on two wheels, handbrake turns, power slides and breakaway parts. All the original ingredients are still in place,

But by far the best news for UK gamers is the inclusion of London. If you've ever had to sit in the congestion during peak hours, been cut off by a black cab, or tried to negotiate the Hyde Park roundabout, then this game is going to be an essential purchase.

Wind your window down and scream at your fellow travellers in real life and you're likely to be hunted down and rammed. Likewise, if the London filth see you smashing your way through to an imaginary checkpoint, then you're likely to be arrested and sectioned. Ram the gates of Queenie at Buckingham Palace and you'll probably be beheaded at dawn in front of a crowd of bloodthirsty onlookers. So forget it. Wait for *Midtown Madness 2* (clock up all your traffic grievances in the meantime) and relive all your fantasies from the comfort of your armchair. You know it makes sense. **PCZ**



If you get killed in the game, do you become more powerful than you could possibly imagine?

THE FORCE IS STRONG IN THIS ONE

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER LucasArts
PUBLISHER Activision
WEBSITE www.lucasarts.com
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Winter 2000

IN SUMMARY

The third in the venerable *Dark Forces* series, *Obi-Wan* puts you back in the shoes of the young Jedi as he goes about severing battle droids and using his blossoming force powers among all your favourite *Phantom Menace* scenery.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The fact that it's *Star Wars* is enough isn't it? No? Well there's more. For a start it's a prequel to the sublime *Jedi Knight*, which is still officially 'The Best *Star Wars* Game Ever' (Supertest *PCZ* #80). And it's got a brand new engine, which should provide visuals that can top any other game. And you get to play with your lightsabre, using the force by summoning special moves with your mouse. Cool eh?

STAR WARS: EPISODE I

OBI-WAN

Another chapter in the *Star Wars* saga is being written. Is it a new hope? Or will LucasArts succumb to the Dark Side?

➤ **PROTOCOL OROIO** Richie Shoemaker



More emphasis is being placed on lightsabre battles this time and stealth and tactics will have just as big a part to play as going into rooms guns blazing.

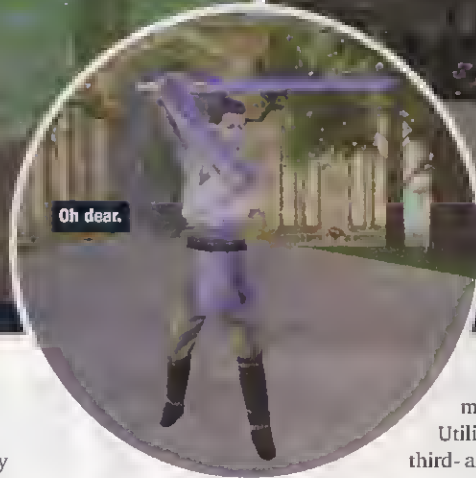
You'll be able to roll, flip and leap your way across all your favourite *Phantom Menace* locations.



Those trees don't look healthy.



This is the view from Coruscant, or is it Hollywood?



Oh dear.

The *Star Wars* series may have lost its way a bit recently, (*The Phantom Menace* didn't satisfy us on the big or the small screen), but we're utterly convinced that *Obi-Wan* is the game that's going to restore LucasArts back to the number one spot. It's the pre-sequel to *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II*, two of the finest 3D shoot 'em ups ever made. Plus, it's going to boast a completely new 3D graphics engine that will allow you to walk around huge outdoor environments taken from the *Star Wars* universe.

The game is set in and around events depicted in *The Phantom Menace* picture. You play the titular part of the young Jedi, whose role is akin to that of a US Marshall in the old West, except that you have an uncanny ability to move objects just by waving your hands about, much like Paul Daniels in fact.

As a lawman in this futuristic wild frontier, it falls to you to save the

planet of Naboo, currently occupied by the nefarious Trade Federation whose ultimate aim is to gain power on the Galactic Senate and make a few bob at the same time.

And so, with Battle Droids on patrol, and with force powers at the ready and lightsabre humming, it's up to you to save the day. And so the press booklet goes on for another ten glossy pages, most of which you probably already knew or could have guessed without too much effort.

What you perhaps didn't know and certainly what makes *Obi-Wan* more of an appealing prospect is the addition of a new gesture-based system for use with Force powers and the lightsabre. Unlike the previous *Dark Forces* game where the sabre was just another weapon, and a less than effective one considering what it could do in the right hands, in *Obi-Wan*

it will be your main piece of kit. Utilising a mix of third- and first-person views, by waving your arm about using the mouse, you will be able to call up all manner of powers, from pushing droids to the floor, to pulling out-of-reach objects into your grasp. How LucasArts intends to pull this off is unclear, but we only hope it

In the intervening years since *Jedi Knight* arrived on the scene back in the summer of '97, the first-person action game has gone through many a transformation. These days, gamers demand less in-your-face action and more thought to their games. Intelligent foes and comrades that work in teams are preferred to the homing hordes of cannon fodder that swarmed the corridors of the original

“What makes *Obi-Wan* more of an appealing prospect is the addition of a new gesture-based system for use with Force powers and the lightsabre”

does a better job than Interplay did with *Die By The Sword*.

Obi-Wan also sports a realistic physics model, so every character and object in the game will behave in a realistic manner. This is one piece of the jigsaw that developers have never got right (remember *Tresspasser* anyone?) so we're keeping our fingers crossed for this one.

Jedi. With *Obi-Wan* on the horizon, we are confident LucasArts will succeed in taking the best bits out of the best games and making something special. The fact they have done so in the past means they can do so again. We shall have more details soon, when the game is shown at this year's E3 conference in Los Angeles. Until then, just enjoy the pretty pictures. [E]



With *Star Trek - Voyager* and this, *Quake III* is about to get its first taste of some decent single-player action.

LICENSE TO THRILL...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Electronic Arts

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts

WEBSITE <http://007.ea.com/>

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE End of 2000

IN SUMMARY

The first James Bond game on the PC. What's more, the *Quake III* engine powers it. Guaranteed hit?

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The World Is Not Enough is set to use the *Quake III* engine to its full potential. It will feature more than 20 weapons for you to cause havoc with, along with loads of gadgets, stealth and espionage. Its seamless cut-sequences will also be something to look forward to.

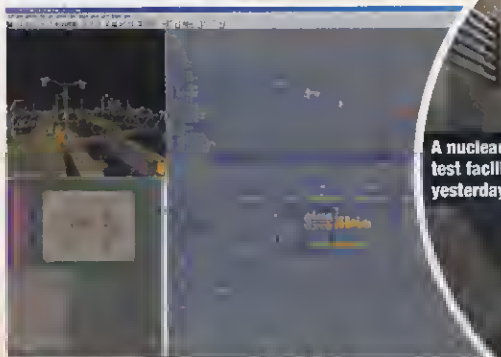
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Bond finally makes it to the PC – but is he quaking in his boots?

★ **ARCH-VILLAIN** Keith Pullin



GoldenEye meets Quake III?



How to build a James Bond level?



Oh dear... Bond forgets his locker number.



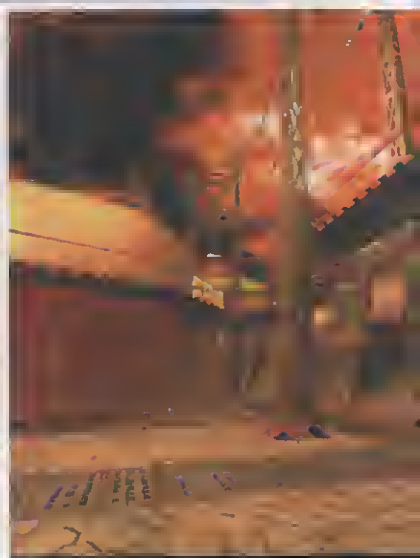
The size and complexity of the levels should make for top multiplayer action.



A nuclear test facility, yesterday.



Ah, Mr Bond, wiz sis Quake III engine you are really spilling us.



Red sky at night - Bond's delight.

Until *GoldenEye* appeared for the N64, James Bond conversions were about as exciting as George Lazenby's acting ability. Still, that never stopped errant conversions such as *Live And Let Die* and *License To Kill* from seeping onto the Commodore 64, Spectrum and Amiga. Strangely, the PC never succumbed to 007 nonsense.

A couple of months ago all that changed after some bright spark at Electronic Arts came up with the striking thought: 'James Bond + *Quake III* engine = dead cert'. They could be right too, because although it's still nowhere near completion *The World Is Not Enough* looks simply breathtaking.

QIII's high-detail first-person engine means that film scenes can be reproduced almost exactly. Missions in the game include flouncing around the Russian nuclear submarine in Baku, skiing down the Caucasus mountains

while trying to avoid machine gun totting mini-helicopter things, and racing through Istanbul in Bond's ultra-techy BMW. There are more than ten missions in total, and throughout each level you'll be treated to a deluge of cut sequences, which, due to the excellence of the *QIII* engine, merge seamlessly into the gameplay.

As well as being able to drive different vehicles, there will be more

(Robert Carlyle) and Lara Croft lookalike Dr Christmas Jones (Denise Richards).

So it's big, it's brash and, of course, it's explosive, yet wisely EA has not forgotten the other 007 trademarks. Firstly there are the gadgets: a full arsenal of Q's finest creations will be available, enabling you to cause maximum mayhem - watch out for exploding toothpaste and laser

“A full arsenal of Q's finest creations will be available, enabling you to cause maximum mayhem - watch out for exploding toothpaste and laser watches. Other gadgets are being invented as we speak”


than 20 high-tech weapons to large it up with. You'll need them too. Enemy AI is finely honed in the inimitable *QIII* fashion, and as a little aesthetic bonus unique skins have been created for all the major characters, including überbabe Elektra King (Sophia Marceau), arch-villain Renard

watches. Other gadgets are being invented as we speak - unfortunately EA won't release any more details, and bleated on about national security or something...

What it was more forthcoming about was the fact that a large proportion of the gameplay is stealth

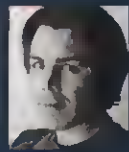
orientated (you are supposed to be a spy after all). Whether this will be under the guise of using shadows and fog as cover is currently unknown. One thing's for sure, though, avoiding combat is usually better than facing off against an entire terrorist army. In short, if you can destroy a building and its contents by espionage alone, then don't hesitate.

Finally, EA promise full Internet and LAN multiplayer support. According to sources, this should involve main characters such as Bond, Jones, Renard and King in team-based combat. Extra henchmen can be called upon to join your team as NPCs or indeed as human players, although, why anyone would want to be a pawn when they can be the man himself is another matter entirely.

Hopefully we'll have the answer to that question and more information besides closer to *TWINE*'s release at the end of 2000. And with any luck, if the game's anything like the film, Christmas will come twice this year... 

PLAYING CATCH UP

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



So Microsoft has thrown its mighty gauntlet into the console arena. As PC owners,

shouldn't we be worried that for the umpteenth time in our machine's history it may be superseded by a small box of dedicated chips sold for half the price? On the evidence of what we've seen on the PlayStation 2 so far, the PC's future as a games machine is as secure as it's ever been. We may have a few months catching up to do, but in terms of the technology involved, it won't be long before the PC is ahead again. In terms of games, it always will be. And yes, I will be buying a PlayStation 2, because there are games I like to play in my front room that I don't like to play on my PC and vice versa.

Considering the PC was not designed as a games machine and that its architecture is based on a '70s design, it has done remarkably well to chalk up 11 million gamers. However, with over 800 million PCs in the world (at a rough estimate), the mind boggles at the potential for world domination.

Unfortunately, with the constant need to upgrade, the instability of the software and the image of PC gamers as kids who refuse to grow up, that potential may never be realised.

I could be wrong. I regularly am. And looking at Pure Entertainment's plan for world supremacy, I sincerely hope I am. Pure, as you will read on page 38, is all set to give gamers free access to some of the best games the PC has ever seen via its Freeloader.com site. If enough people visit the site, where first-time gamers can try out games for the paltry cost of a download, perhaps more people will come into the fold. That being the case, the PC may live forever.

OK, it's clunky, heavy, unreliable and expensive, but the games available for it are the most diverse, realistic and involving you can get. If any of you have tried playing a first-person shooter or a real-time strategy game on a console, you'll know what I mean. Vive le PC, as they say.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P:26



ChartTrack

TECH-HEAD

And would you like chips with that, Sir?

P:28



EURO 2000

EA Sports in football game shocker

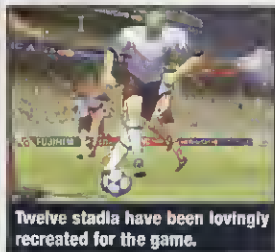
In a surprise move that has left the entire games industry reeling, EA Sports has announced *Euro 2000*, the official game of this summer's main event. And unlike in 1998 when EA released two games – one tasking you to qualify for the World Cup, the other with winning it – *Euro 2000* will include, in EA terms at least, two games for the price of one, by allowing players to ball through qualification to the finals themselves.

Along with having to survive such a long campaign, players will have injuries and suspensions to worry about. Proper training methods also need to be employed, with strategies and set-pieces having to be perfected against your reserves. Far from being a dull affair, however, EA has named its training system Quick Drill, which may not tell us much but points to the fact that *Euro 2000* is certain to be just as pacey as its predecessor.

Candy floss-wise, EA Sports will include all its usual 3D-accelerated bunting, with flags and mascots all being paraded across the menu screens. No doubt some Top 40 tune will be licensed to greet gamers as the game loads up and, as expected, new off-the-ball animations and facial expressions will be injected into the formula. In fact, barring any major upset, *Euro 2000* is likely to be the best title of the series so far, when it's released next month.



Another perfectly timed tackle.



Twelve stadia have been lovingly recreated for the game.



Sniff that.

MORE AGES FOR EMPIRES II

In predictable fashion, Ensemble Studios, developer of the *Age Of Empires* series, is working on *The Conquerors*, the first official add-on disc for *Age Of Empires II*.



No screenshots for *The Conquerors* as yet.

True to form, the pack – not out until October – will feature five new medieval civilisations and four new single-player campaigns. New multiplayer modes will also be included, such as Capture The Wonder and Oasis; where players must race to collect resources in the centre of the map.

On news of a third *Age Of Empires* game, Ensemble remains coy, only ruling out the possibility of a fantasy or sci-fi spin-off.

ONLINE DIARY

Soon we'll all be fragging online for free

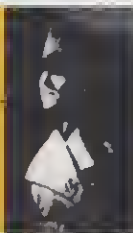
P.33



MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip

P.40



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Three games that should've been here by now

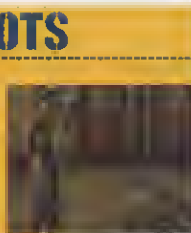
P.41



HOTSHOTS

Big games and even bigger pictures

P.42



THE MECHS BIG THING

Whether you prefer to stomp around in a 40ft high suit of armour, or direct the action from above, Microsoft has got it covered with two *Mech* sequels on the way

The annual Gamestock event is something of a must for freeloading game hacks, not just for the simple reason that the host Microsoft usually offers up a lot more than a bunch of new games to write about. Alongside the likes of *Midtown Madness 2*, *Dungeon Siege* and *Combat Flight Sim 2* (all of which you can read about elsewhere in the magazine), Microsoft announced two new Mech games - *MechWarrior 4* and the second in the acclaimed *MechCommander* series, now in caramel smooth 3D.

The BattleTech universe is now in its 16th year, and if you're fond of strapping yourself into an 80 tonne, 40ft tall piece of metal there's no better place to be. *MechWarrior 4* places you as the last in your family line, fighting to avenge your father's death and reclaim the planet from the baddies.

Of more interest though, is the fact that instead of desolate lands to romp across, *MechWarrior 4* places you inside a dynamic campaign with 30 new and unique missions, including a palace assault and a one-on-one with a drop ship. You should get a true sense of scale with this one, as you can enter real cities and watch pedestrians leg it as you try crush them underfoot. And it's not just about being

a good shot. As well as commanding an individual Mech you have to decide where and when you want to deploy your forces and develop your team.

If you've been put off Mech games before, the developers are keen to point out that simplicity and destruction is the order of the day here. Tactics and success in missions come from the fact that you can modify every part of the universe with specific weapons. A simple user interface and extensive on-board help means that everyone should be able to strap in and go when the game is released later in the year.

Prefer a bit more up top? Let the grunts strap themselves into the metal while you command strategy from a position of safety. *MechWarrior* allows you to get your hands dirty, while *MechCommander 2* is an RTS that allows you to command legions of the hunks in an epic battle that revolves around three of the noble houses in the BattleTech Universe.

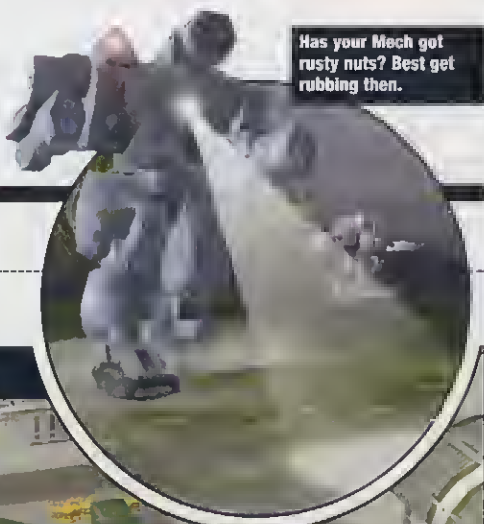
The game is going to be fully 3D, with plenty of rolling terrain. To get a better view of the battle you



Night darkness provides a bit of cover - even for huge robots.

can move from the commander view to a more traditional Mech view, and as you progress each of your MechWarriors grows in stature and skill.

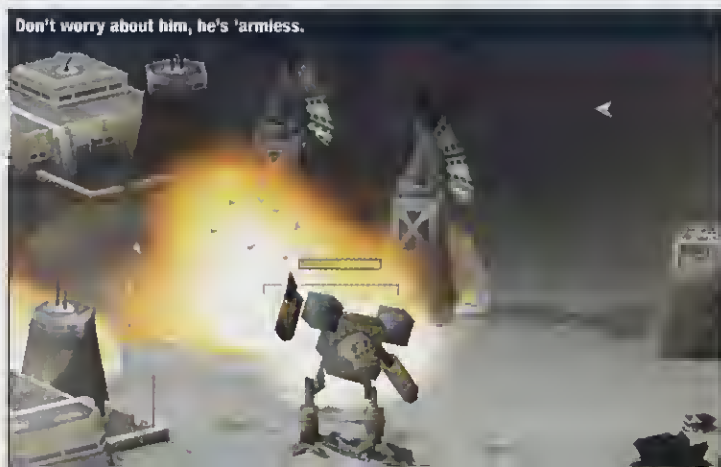
Having a ready-made and familiar world gives *MechCommander 2* an advantage in constructing an RTS game, and with full multiplayer gaming on the MSN Gaming Zone or over a LAN we reckon it'll be a biggie. *MechCommander 2* is released early next year.



Has your Mech got rusty nuts? Best get rubbing then.

KNIGHTS IN STRIDING ARMOUR

MechCommander 2 will bring 3D acceleration to the strategy world of BattleTech



Don't worry about him, he's 'armless.



A fully functional *MechCommander* base.

SPACE ONLY COMES IN ONE SIZE...

MASSIVE



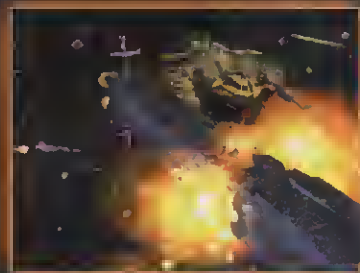
Explore a vast and diverse universe



Unique and immersive two-sided storyline



Fly up to 11 fully upgradeable spacecraft



128 multiplayer battlefest via NovaWorld

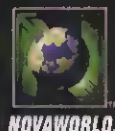


TACHYON™

T H E F R I N G E

NOVALOGIC

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Where's the moose head on the wall?

EVIL DEAD COMES TO LIFE

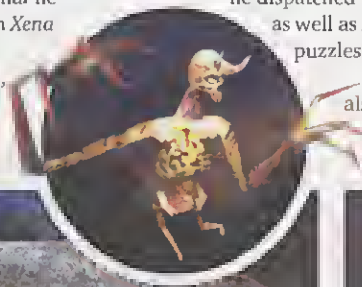
First shots of THQ's horror classic

This development house may be unheard of, but Heavy Iron Studios, currently coding the third-person adventure *Evil Dead: Hail To The King*, has some serious pedigree among its undead ranks. Not only are many of the team formerly of SquareSoft (*Final Fantasy VII and VIII*), but Renaissance Studios – the production company of film director Sam Raimi – is also heavily involved in the project. And if you have no idea who Sam Raimi is, all you need know is that he directed all three *Evil Dead* films. He also has a hand in *Xena* and *Hercules*, but we won't go into that...

Set eight years after the last film, *Army Of Darkness*, this game sees chisel-jawed hero, Ash, return to the cabin in the woods where he carved up his girlfriend with a chainsaw. Once again he stumbles across

the *Book Of The Dead*, and somehow manages to unleash a series of untold evils upon the world.

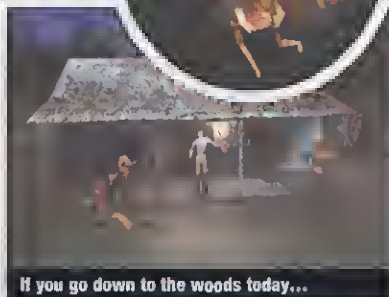
The game will tread the same dark path as *Nocturne* and *Resident Evil*, with 3D characters moving in 24-bit pre-rendered backgrounds. Already the environments look stunning, and, with Bruce Campbell reprising his role as Ash, we can expect plenty of corny speech with much hilarity to counter the gore and tense gameplay. As well as flying skulls and wisecracking zombies, we can expect to encounter plenty of new Deadites, all of whom can be dispatched with a variety of upgradeable weapons,



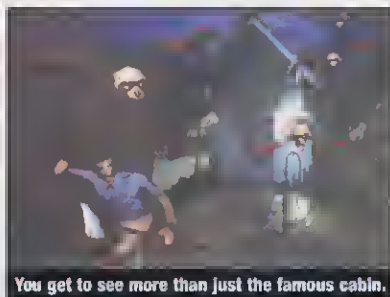
as well as Ash's trademark chainsaw. With loads of puzzles to solve, *Evil Dead* is shaping up to be the scariest game of the year and hopefully also one of the funniest. We won't have too long to wait either, as the release date has been set for later in the year.



The skeleton crew take on Ash.



If you go down to the woods today...



You get to see more than just the famous cabin.

JOIN THE Q

We've lost count of the number of *Star Trek* games in development, not surprising when one seems to be announced almost every month. Recently, publishing giant Activision proclaimed another two were on the way: *ConQuest Online* and *Bridge Commander*.

Last month we mentioned that Verant, creator of *EverQuest*, was developing a *Star Trek* online game, well it's not *Star Trek: ConQuest Online*. However, *ConQuest Online* is being developed by Genetic Anomalies and will be the first *Star Trek* game solely produced for online play. Confused? Don't be.

Turn-based, *ConQuest Online* is essentially a collectable card trading game, where as members of the Q Continuum players must Top Trump-it out to get control of planets, eventually eliminating players by taking over their home planets.

More than 150 pieces from *The Next Generation* (weapons, ships and characters) will make up the game, with new pieces being made available for download after release, drawing more on other *Trek* franchises. These extras will have to be paid for in real money, as well as the cost of the game, although we don't know as yet how much the game will cost to play.

Star Trek: Bridge Commander is perhaps more of an enticing prospect, seeing as it is being developed by Totally Games, home of Lawrence Holland, the creator of the *X-Wing* series. *BridgeCom*, as it is no doubt referred to by the team, will be a mission-based affair, with players taking the Captain's chair and leading their crew through difficult negotiations, exploring new systems and all-out war. Set in the Next Gen Universe, players will be able to command a variety of vessels via a 3D bridge, barking out orders at a 3D crew. We are told Picard, Data and many others from the series will make a vocal appearance, with all the familiar races keen to wipe that smug Federation smile from your face.

Although no firm release dates have been set for either game, *ConQuest Online* will be the first on the shelves, with *Bridge Commander* out next year. Stay tuned for the latest screenshots.



Nope, not a clue.



Er...

SHORTS

MONKEY GOOF

Back in our February issue we stated that Tim Schafer, ex-LucasArts adventure guru, was working on the script for the fourth *Monkey Island* series. Unfortunately, this news came as a complete surprise to him and we'd just like to state that our sources were evidently unreliable. Since the article, Tim Schafer has left LucasArts to form his own team. Details on *Monkey Island 4*, still to be officially announced, are speculative at best. Sorry about that Tim.

SQUAD LEADER



Based on a classic American board game, *Squad Leader* is a WWII strategy game, best described as a turn-based *Commandos*. Play as either the American, British or German armies in historically accurate campaigns, such as the invasion of Normandy, the Battle Of The Bulge and Operation Market Garden. Alternatively, when you get tired of those you could build your own scenarios. Your squad will have their own unique strengths and weaknesses and you'll have to manage their development to be successful.

BLIZZARD SPLIT

Three senior Blizzard staff have left the company to form their own development team, Trilorge. We are told that there will be no disruption as a result of their departure, which seems odd considering that one was the team leader of *WarCraft III* and another the project leader on an as-yet unannounced Blizzard game (which may or may not be *StarCraft II*). As for Trilorge itself, the company now has the main architect of *Battle.Net* on its team and will be focusing solely on the next generation of online games.

BATTLESHIP 3D

Hasbro Interactive is bringing the classic pen-and-paper game bang up to date with *Battleship II*. Featuring 3D graphics and fleets armed with missiles, guns and planes, the game will be played in real time with a strong focus on fast-paced battles. It's set to ship (pun lully intended) in September and will include full multiplayer support.

SHORTS

MAKE HASTE

Another *Quake III*-powered game is in development, this one going by the name of *Haste*. Set in a futuristic Chicago, the game sees you as an undercover cop, the aim being to topple a gang leader in control of the city streets, either using extreme force or underhand stealth tactics. Think *Thief* meets *Soldier Of Fortune*, with plenty of real-world weaponry to test out along the way.



CLEOPATRA, COMIN' ATCHA

Impressions has announced *Cleopatra*, the first expansion pack for its empire-building strategy game, *Pharaoh*. Out this summer, the pack will provide a new campaign centring on three of ancient Egypt's most famous rulers: Cleopatra, Ramses II and Tutankhamen. New features include the option to build wonders, such as the Temple of Amon-Re, as well as new buildings and specialist citizens such as painters and lamp makers.

In the meantime, you can download a 3Mb enhancement pack for *Pharaoh*, which includes 20 new missions and an editor. Just go to www.pczone.co.uk

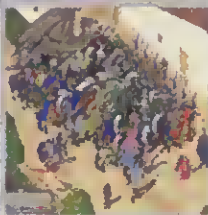
LOST TOYS FOUND

The stars of last month's 'World According To...' feature, ex-Bullfrog boys Lost Toys, have announced that their first game will be published by Take 2.

Going by the name *Mollo*, the game will arrive first on PlayStation in the summer and will appear on PC in the Autumn. All we know so far about the game is that it's an arcade racer - with a twist.

UO RENAISSANCE

If you're interested, EA will be releasing the third edition of its online role-player, *Ultima Online: Renaissance*, at the end of April. New features include an entire town devoted to training up new players, an updated interface, an in-game tutorial, enhanced AI, two new skills and new lands to explore.



NORSE CODE

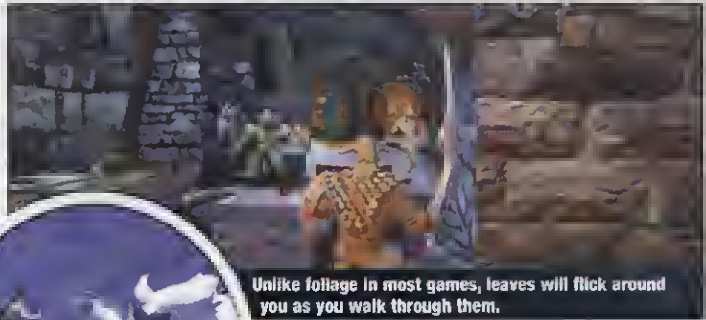
The Vikings are coming to pillage a village

Developer Human Head is hoping to make a name for itself with *Rune*, a third-person action game set in a mythical Viking era and, having worked on many of Raven's fantasy games in the past (*Hexen*, *Heretic*, *Mageslayer*), the team certainly knows its goblins.

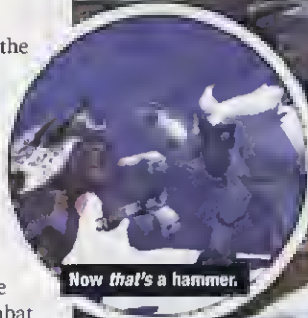
Playing the heroic Ragnar, the aim is to thwart the savage advance of the Dark Vikings by using all manner of swords and axes, as well as improvised weapons such as torches, rocks and severed timbs - all of which has been done before to varying degrees of success in games such as *Heretic II*, *Drakan* and *Die By The Sword*. What makes *Rune* different, however, is the graphics.

Ragnar's movements currently require over 1,200 frames of animation - with many more to be slotted in to accommodate the location-based combat system. Also, rather than reel off a standard bestiary of goblins, giant spiders and golems, Human Head plans to have entire races of creatures. For example, it hopes to have 96 varieties of goblin, varying in height, colour, build and even - though perhaps not - sexual orientation.

Being a hack 'n' slash affair, magic and spell casting are unlikely to feature heavily. However, with a variety of items to pick up and use, *Rune* may well offer a more intelligent and action-packed alternative to the likes of *Tomb Raider V* next Christmas.



Unlike foliage in most games, leaves will flick around you as you walk through them.



Now that's a hammer.



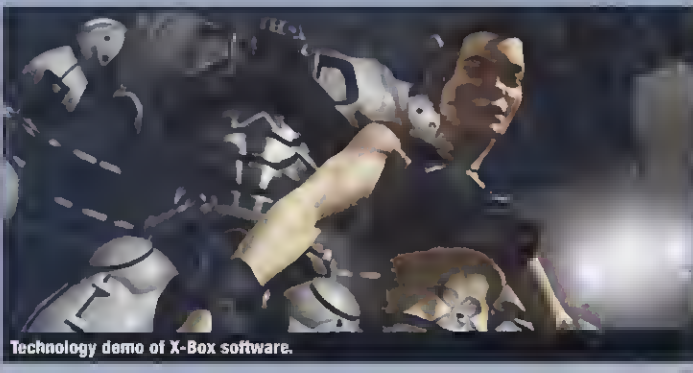
Snow monkeys, or something.

X-BOX NOW OFFICIAL

The speculation is over. It has been announced that X-Box, Microsoft's dedicated games console, will be on sale in March 2001, with a worldwide release set for next Autumn.

The machine, powered by a 600MHz CPU (rumoured to be an AMD chip), will house a custom nVIDIA graphics accelerator running at 300MHz, four-speed DVD drive, 8Gb Hard drive and 64Mb RAM. On the outside will be four game ports, an expansion port and a broadband Internet connection.

As well as Electronic Arts, Acclaim and Eidos, PlayStation publisher Konami has announced it will be developing games for the machine. You may remember that Microsoft and Konami announced a cross-platform publishing deal last year, no doubt the X-Box helped smooth the deal through. Microsoft itself will be expanding its games division with a view to having a decent number of games ready for launch. Thanks to the architecture and the operating system of the X-Box (Windows and DirectX-based), porting over PC games will be a breeze. Whether this process will work the other way around is yet to be officially revealed.



Technology demo of X-Box software.

DESERT ISLAND GDS

If Oorian Hart, veteran games designer at Looking Glass Studios, was marooned on a desert island with only a PC, an unlimited power supply and five games, which would he choose?



- ★ STARCRAFT (Sierra)
 - ★ HERDES OF M&M III (Ubi Soft)
 - ★ CIVILIZATION II (Hasbro)
 - ★ STAR CONTROL 2 (Accolade)*
 - ★ ASHERON'S CALL (Microsoft)
- *choice if allowed only one game

Comment

"Strategy games that have mission or scenario editors are obvious choices. *StarCraft*, *Heroes III* and *Civ II* are among the finest examples. They're well tuned and well balanced, and have the ability to make time go faster.

"As long as *Asheron's Call* keeps introducing new plots and events, it will supply some externally-provided dynamism that my sandy prison would otherwise lack.

"*Star Control 2* is the finest PC game ever made. Its Melee Mode would provide necessary replayability. The reason it would be my only game if I were restricted? Alone and desolate, I'd need the Pkunk's deep sense of spirituality to keep me sane."





MICHELIN RALLY MASTERS

RACE OF CHAMPIONS

**ONLY WHEN YOU GO HEAD-TO-HEAD,
CAN YOU BE A REAL CHAMPION.**

It has pure ability, determination and a burning desire to win. Experience the unique excitement of going head-to-head against the greatest rally drivers the world has to offer.

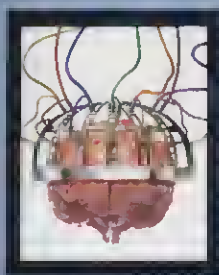
Your cars are equally matched, the only advantage you have is your own superior driving skills. Compete in 4 competitions over 40 different courses across the globe. With realistic damage and performance affective smashes all adding to the dynamic realism that totally immerses your senses.

Challenge up to 30 real world rally drivers in over 17 rally cars old and new. Go head-to-head against a rival for an unparalleled contest full of tension. Only a true champion has got what it takes to win.



www.raceofchampions.com
www.rallymasters.com





TECHHEAD

Intel takes a trip down memory lane, plus all the latest hardware news

★ WORDS Carlos Ruiz

FACTCANNON

★ Toshiba (www.toshiba.com) is relatively new in the CD-R camp, but it has already sparked innovation with the SD-R1DD2 Combo drive. Not only can it read and write CD-R and CD-RW media in the same way as normal CD ReWriter drives, but it acts as a fully functional DVD-ROM drive as well. The retail kit includes pretty much everything you'll need for both purposes, and is set to cost around £250.

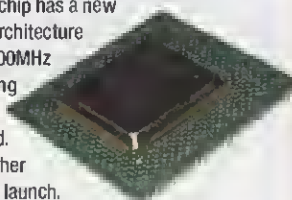


★ IBM is telling everyone who'll listen about a fantastic new technology that has emerged from its top-secret laboratories. IBM claims this new technology will allow it to manufacture processors that run at up to 4.5GHz (that's 4,500MHz folks), and require only half as much power as today's best offerings. Another twist in the tale for Intel and AMD then, who will introduce 1GHz chips later in the year.

★ Creative has consistently churned out new versions of its excellent Nomad portable MP3 players, but none look quite as stunning as its latest model – the Nomad II. It includes a 64Mb SmartMedia card, which is enough for several hours of CD-quality MP3 music, and a built-in FM radio with room for 20 preset stations. It has tons of other cool tricks up its sleeve and all the details can be found at www.nomadworld.com



★ Official leaks from Intel HQ have suggested that its new processor, codenamed Williamette, will go into production during July in order to make its October launch. The 32-bit chip has a new 'hyper-pipelined' architecture and will run on a 400MHz system bus, allowing for 3.2Gb of data transfer per second. We'll bring you further updates before the launch.



★ AMD recently demonstrated a new, updated version of its popular Athlon processor, codenamed Thunderbird. If you're wondering why it warrants such a swish title, we can tell you that all the traditional aluminium interconnects have been replaced with superior copper, and the Level 2 cache has now been moved on-die and runs at full speed. That's seriously fast, but we're not sure whether Thunderbird will be aimed at home users.

INTEL'S MEMORY LAPSE

Different types of RAM have given the chip giant a headache this year

Intel has been running into all kinds of trouble since it realised it actually had some competition. We appreciate the complexities of running one of the largest global organisations, but its latest mishap has not done its status any favours. After months of waiting for a new motherboard with all the latest features, this happened...

Motherboards based on Intel's i82D chipset were intended to cater instantly for everyone wanting to get top performance from the new 'Coppermine' Pentium III processors (indicated by their E/B/E8 tags – see www.intel.com for details). Unfortunately, they only resulted in embarrassment, which stemmed from Intel's decision to include native support for RAMBUS (or RDRAM) memory.

This meant to get decent performance from an i82D, you needed to buy RDRAM – which is not only slower than it was originally intended to be, it's also in short supply and is very expensive. We're talking £500-600 for a 128Mb stick, as opposed to just £150 for the same amount of SDRAM.

It also meant that using your existing SDRAM in an i82D, while very cost effective and entirely possible,

resulted in a significant speed cost thanks to the i820's method of accessing SDRAM via a 'translator hub'. Not a good option, then.

Thankfully though, Intel realised the error of its ways and has come up with two alternatives. Firstly, the revised i820 motherboards include an updated '82 stepping' of the memory architecture, meaning that both RDRAM and SDRAM can be accessed on the same planar with no speed detritus.

Secondly, the new i815 chipset rules out RDRAM support completely, and provides dedicated support for SDRAM. This is likely to be a cheaper option than the revised i820, but to be honest, we would probably rather have the choice of upgrading to RDRAM at a later date.

They both have all the features that the original i820 boasted, such as 133MHz bus speeds, AGP4x and ATA/66 (ensuring you get the best performance out of the latest hardware), and support for Pentium III processors up to around 800MHz. Even better, they should both be available by the time you read this.

3D CARD UPDATE

It's business as usual for the graphics gurus

Following on from last month's revelations about NVIDIA's hard-hitting product roadmap, the graphics giant has now released excellent financial results that can only be attributed to the outstanding success of its TNT2 and GeForce 256 chipsets. With regards to NVIDIA's disagreement with S3, we can reveal that the pair have officially kissed and made up. Both companies have ditched their patent suits against each other, and they've signed a seven year deal that will see them cross-ticensing each other's technology.

NVIDIA's (www.nvidia.com) latest 64Mb DDR GeForce 256 cards should be hitting stores in the UK as we speak. They will be high on any gamer's wish list, and it's not hard to see why – with the quality and features of the GeForce 256 chipset, and 64Mb of Double

Data Rate memory (much faster than the traditional SDRAM).

S3's improved Savage 2000 cards (www.diamondmm.com) will also be seeing the light of day soon – with 64Mb of RAM, faster clock speeds, improved drivers and a working T&L implementation. It'll be very interesting to see how they compare to the best NVIDIA has to offer, especially when T&L games get released later this year.



There's life left yet in the GeForce 256 chipset, and cards such as this will be flying off the shelves.



Only a select few got a sneak preview of the new 3dfx Voodoo cards at CEBIT.

Although 3dfx (www.3dfx.com) is still waiting in the wings with its Voodoo4 and 5 cards, show-goers were provided with hands on experience at the CEBIT 2000 exhibition in Germany. Its glitzy stand was blessed with the presence of none other than Lara Weller (the latest stand-in for Lara Croft), and other high profile games, such as *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

Hopefully we'll be doing some more graphics card reviews in the near future, and when all the big boys are finally released and fighting it out, there will be no better time for a full-blown roundup. Stay tuned...

UNREAL TOURNAMENT GETS REAL



A whole host of new maps will be based in real-world locations.



An early map featuring a house, obviously.

Modifiers, maps and total conversions (TCs) for *Unreal Tournament* are appearing almost on a daily basis, but perhaps what is most eagerly awaited is a TC going by the name of *Strike Force*, which aims to give the sci-fi shooter a dose of reality by setting special forces and terrorists against each other.

Combining the stealth-orientated gameplay of *Half-Life's* superb *Counter-Strike* TC, with the teamplay aspect of *Team Fortress*, *Strike Force* is a multiplayer conversion that instead of offering a group of models for the player to choose from, will give each character an identity and unique mix of skills. More than 20 modern-day weapons should make it into the free download, with a wide variety of new multiplayer game variations planned; from escorting leaders, capture and hold, hostage rescue and convoy protection. Go to www.planetunreal.com/strikeforce to keep up with the developments.

OUR MOST WANTED

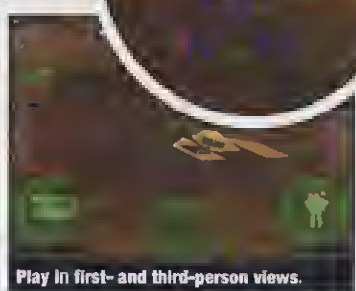
Having been treated to recent showings of *Deus Ex*, Chris Taylor's *Dungeon Siege* and *Praetorians*, our ten most wanted games have suddenly become nearer 2D. Simmering under those below come the likes of *C&C: Renegade*, *Dark Reign 2* and *Dreamland Chronicles*. It's almost too much to bear.

1	Black & White (Lionhead/EA)	May/June
2	Deus Ex (Ion Storm/Eidos)	May
3	Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption (Nihilistic/Aclivision)	June
4	Star Trek: Voyager - Elite Force (Raven/Aclivision)	TBC
5	Dungeon Siege (Gas Powered Games/Microsoft)	2001
6	Team Fortress 2 (Valve/Sierra)	Winter 2000
7	Duke Nukem Forever (3D Realms/Infogrames)	Autumn
8	Freelancer (Digital Anvil/Microsoft)	2001
9	Praetorians (Pyro/Eidos)	Winter 2000
10	Sudden Strike (CDV/TBC)	May/June



Weather effects and day/night cycles are promised.

Well it's certainly colourful.



Play in first- and third-person views.



Research and design new vehicles.

IRON STRATEGY

Mech combat from Russia

You may have noticed back on page 23 that Microsoft has two *Mech* games in the works; one where you pilot the mechanised beasts (*MechWarrior 4*), the other where you command a whole herd of them from on high (*MechCommander 2*). Surprisingly, there are no plans to link the two. However, Russian developer Nikita has gone one better with *Iron Strategy*, in that not only does it give you the opportunity to stomp around in first- or third-person views, but you can direct your WarBots as well, either by using wingman commands, or by utilising a 3D satellite view.

As the commander of your forces (the Prospector) you must collect resources, research new weaponry and build the units necessary to defeat your enemies. The units under your command can be built with a number of chassis; either with legs, tracks, wheels or wings - each of which can accommodate a certain amount of weaponry.

Of course, all of this wouldn't be such a hot prospect if you couldn't jump into any of the bots on offer and go around racking up kills of your own. We've seen the game in action and although the units sport some pretty garish colours, the game looks as though with a bit more work it could take on both of Microsoft's *Mech* games at the same time.

Although Nikita is pretty much unknown outside of its native Russia, we are sure a UK publisher will be found soon. Release is set for the summer, so keep your eyes peeled for more details in a future issue.

YOU

THEM

WESTERN ALLIANCE FORCES ARE WEAK. THE EASTERN COALITION ARE TAKING NO PRISONERS.



Controlling other people's lives is still popular with PC gamers.

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what you think

THE TOP 10

MAR	APR	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REV SCORE
1	1	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
2	2	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASDN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EI00S	92%
NE	3	HALF-LIFE: GENERATIDNS	VALVE & GEARBOX	SIERRA	95%
3	4	HALF-LIFE	VALVE	SIERRA	95%
9	5	AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE DF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOIS	MICROSOFT	90%
4	6	HALF-LIFE: DPROSING FORCE	GEARBOX	SIERRA	85%
NE	7	FIHAL FANTASY VIII	SQUARESOFT	EID0S	83%
5	8	OELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
8	9	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC / DIGITAL EXTREMES	GT INTERACTIVE	90%
7	10	SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE	SIERRA STUDIOS	SIERRA	89%

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

There's been very little change this month in the top half of the charts, a fact which pays tribute to the endearing qualities possessed by the likes of *The Sims*, *CM 99/00* and *AoEII*. It's games such as these, which prove that gaming depth and playability are of paramount importance to the majority of PC gamers.

Seeing *Toy Story* in the Top 10 again is no real surprise, what with the film inducing hysteria in the under-10s. The presence of *Superbike 2000* goes to show that motorbike games aren't as unpopular as some would suggest. It's also a relief that the gaming public has seen sense over *Airport Inc* (37%, *PCZ* #88), which has plummeted since last month's surprise entry at number eight.

Martin Korda

THE TOP 10

MAR	APR	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
3	2	CHAMP MANAGER: SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EI00S	92%
4	3	AGE OF EMPIRES II: AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOIS	MICROSOFT	90%
NE	4	HALF-LIFE GENERATIONS	VALVE & GEARBOX	SIERRA	95%
2	5	OELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
NE	6	FINAL FANTASY VIII	SQUARESOFT	EI00S	83%
5	7	TOY STORY 2	300	300	55%
NE	8	SUPERBIKES 2000	MILESTONE	EA	78%
NE	9	FA PREM LEAGUE MANAGER 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	75%
NE	10	GRAND PRIX WORLD	MICROPROSE	HASBRO	71%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"*Delta Force 2* seems to have been around in the charts for ages. It's fun, but I don't think it's a Top 10 game. *The Sims* on the other hand is superb, I never thought I'd have so much fun making a computer sprite go about its daily mundane tasks. A true work of genius."

Sam MacMannus, Edinburgh

"*Champ Manager* totally rules. I've lost my life and my job to it. Only joking, but it is bloody addictive. You never know, I may even get some sleep one of these days, but I just have to get my team into Europe first. I love *Grand Prix World* and *The Sims* as well. I suppose I'm just a bit of a control freak really. *Toy Story 2*? The less said about that one the better I think, don't you?"

John Powell, London

"I bought *Final Fantasy VIII* the other day and I love it. The FMVs are amazing, and the story is so well written. It deserves to be higher in the charts. I want to buy *Half-Life: Generations*, as I must be the only PC owner in the world who doesn't have a copy. *Superbike 2000* looks like a good biking game, but I can't see it staying there longer than a month."

Mark Johnson, Kent

"It still amazes me just how games like *Toy Story 2* and *Grand Prix World* get into the Top 10. Who the hell buys these games anyway? It certainly isn't anyone I know. Good to see *Half-Life* still up there with the best of them, but what's happened to *Unreal Tournament*? How can *Delta Force 2* still be in the charts while *UT* and even *Duake III* aren't? I'm totally baffled."

Josh Lowe, Manchester

COMPETITION WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

Question: in what year was the original *SimCity* released?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with with all the information requested, to the address below:

- ✪ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18
- ✪ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies
- ✪ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ001A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5SR. Closing date: Thursday 4 May

✪ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capisce?

RETRO CHARTS

- 1 YEAR AGO...**
- 1 *Rollercoaster Tycoon* (MicroProse)
 - 2 *Superbike World Championship* (EA)
 - 3 *SimCity 3000* (Maxis)
 - 4 *Sid Meler's Alpha Centauri* (Firaxis)
 - 5 *Premier Manager 99* (Gremlin Interactive)
- 2 YEARS AGO...**
- 1 *Tomb Raider II* (Eidos)
 - 2 *Quake II* (Activision)
 - 3 *Championship Manager 97/98* (Eidos)
 - 4 *Grand Theft Auto* (BMG)
 - 5 *FIFA: Road to the World Cup 98* (EA)
- 5 YEARS AGO...**
- 1 *Dark Forces* (LucasArts)
 - 2 *Descent* (Interplay)
 - 3 *Star Trek Final Unity* (Microprose)
 - 4 *Doom 2* (Virgin)
 - 5 *Wing Commander III* (EA)



And it was all looking so good.

BABYLON 5 CANNED AGAIN

Codemasters USA to concentrate on online games

The troubled history of the long-awaited *Babylon 5: Into The Fire*, which was dropped by Sierra just a few months ago, took another downward turn when Codemasters USA announced it would no longer be developing the game, concentrating instead on various online-only properties.

The 3D combat space sim's future was left in doubt following the dismissal of around 20 developers, including Ken Prugh, the game's lead designer since the beginning of the project. "I feel very bad about the decision, and I think that a huge mistake has been made," said Prugh following the announcement. *Babylon 5* wasn't the only title canned during the restructuring process. The much-touted Unreal-powered shooter *Navy SEALs* has also been left floundering.

Codemasters USA originally rescued the project following its cancellation by Sierra last September. There have been strong rumours circulating that a third, unnamed publisher will pick up the title as Codemasters USA weren't the only company that expressed an interest in the game when Sierra let it go.

In the meantime, dedicated fans at FirstOnes.com are putting together a petition designed to show any potential saviours the mammoth fanbase for the title. This won't be the first time gamers have been moved into making their voices heard following a game's cancellation. Last year saw a strong, yet unsuccessful, attempt to petition Blizzard into reviving the *Warcraft: Adventures* title. The FirstOnes are more confident however. "Codemasters wasn't the only card left in the stack," it commented on its site. "There is another

“Codemasters originally rescued the project following its cancellation by Sierra last September”

party out there with a respectable chance of getting this game. We represent the fanbase of those willing to purchase and buy the game in the future.”

If you want to make your voice heard, sign up at www.firstones.com. In the meantime, we'll be certain to keep you informed if and when there are any further developments.

BABYLON 5 LIVES ON



The *Babylon 5 Freeware Project*, <http://mods.firststones.com/b5fsf> is an attempt to produce a freely-available space combat sim. It is looking

pretty good so far.



How about a total conversion for *FreeSpace 2*? On the way with a demo available soon apparently. Check out www.planetdescent.com/planetfs/babylon for more information.



[Http://mods.firststones.com/buda5/](http://mods.firststones.com/buda5/) is the home of Buda5, the project to develop a *Babylon 5* universe within *Independence War*. You can download ships now, a single-player campaign to follow soon.



Strategy fans will soon be able to download a full *Babylon 5* total conversion for *Homeworld*. Currently v2.1 is available at <http://mods.firststones.com/homeworld>

firststones.com/homeworld



You're in constant competition with other city planning developers.

POLYGON MONOPOLY

It's time to throw away your old boot, your top hat and the rickety dice as *Monopoly* goes 3D in this *SimCity* look-alike from Deep Red – developer of *Risk II*. *Monopoly Tycoon* still has that entrepreneur spirit though, as you buy street deeds at auctions where computer controlled players will try to outbid you, then demolish derelict factories to build cafes and convenience stores. But instead of actually managing these places you'll be leasing them out to people who must pay their rent every month.

The amount of detail ensures it's a living, breathing city, with cleaners sweeping the dew soaked litter and trucks delivering goods to shops every dawn, just before the rush hour traffic clogs up the roads. You can even observe individual people going about their lives with loads of information available about them, which creates a true thriving urban environment.

As with the original there are cheap, poor bits and posh, expensive ones, only now you get the former ones as disgusting slums with graffitied walls and vagabonds drinking from brown paper bags and the latter as clean and shiny tree-lined streets. Expect to see it towards the end of the year.



The game will remain faithful to the old-fashioned game with a real '50s look.

ENEMY

YOU

TERROR FROM ABOVE, BELOW AND ALL SIDES.
IS THERE ANY WAY OUT FOR THE MAVERICK 45TH SQUADRON?



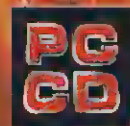
DRIVING WITH A DIFFERENCE DRIVING WITH A DIFFERENCE

NCPD 1-456



rolledge STAGE II

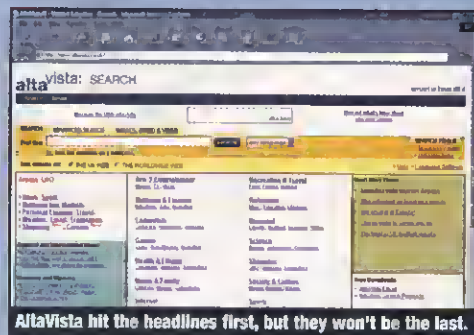
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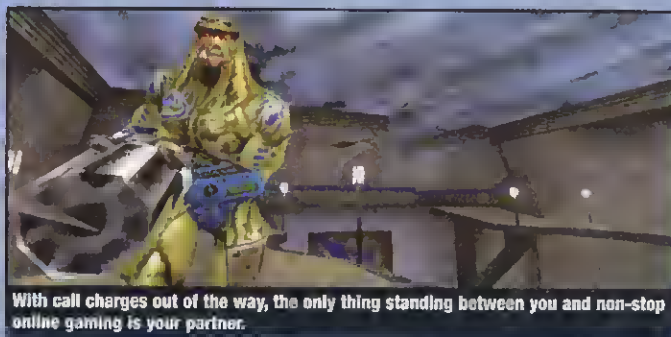
ONLINE DIARY

The latest news and views in the wonderful world of the Web

★ CYBER CADGER Phil Wand



AltaVista hit the headlines first, but they won't be the last.



With call charges out of the way, the only thing standing between you and non-stop online gaming is your partner.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Keep up to date with the best offers by checking out these sites

- www.callnet0800.co.uk
- www.x-stream.co.uk
- www.altavista.co.uk
- www.ntl.co.uk
- www.freeserve.co.uk
- www.btinternet.co.uk
- www.0800freedom.co.uk
- www.screaming.net
- www.telewest.co.uk

UNMETERED ACCESS

Stay in cyberspace all day, every day for less than the cost of a Mojo

It's hard to believe, we know, but you can now have the Internet pumped into your home around the clock for nothing. Of course it took various large American corporates to kick their idiot Limey cousins into action, but now everyone's clambering aboard the unlimited access handwagon. Even the penny-pinching BT has suggested they'll tag along for the ride. Blimey.

Things started moving back in autumn of last year when North American Gateway introduced CallNet 0800, a brave new service where any PC user could log on to the Net using a freephone number and start surfing for nowt. Astonished punters from all over the country found the CallNet 0800 dial-up just as quick as their regular ISP and without any engaged tones blocking their route online.

In December, Telewest announced it would offer free access to its existing residential customers for just a tenner a month. And before you hoist a Union Jack and get all patriotic about such a trailblazing move, it should be noted that many of the company's key shareholders are actually American - Microsoft Corporation being the most obvious example.

The whole process then gathered speed with NTL announcing flat fee access, albeit on a first

come, first served basis. Rumour has it that the UK cable giant, one of the largest in Europe, is aiming to be bigger than FreeServe, currently the country's most popular ISP. Its new service, mentioned at the Prime Minister's Question Time, will feature no ISP charges and no call charges - top stuff. Although the company has already been offering £40/month unmetered access for close to a year, this new move is a significant one in that it'll get you online with a fast cable connection and no financial outlay.

Of course, other players in the ISP market haven't been sitting on their hands. To add noise to the brouhaha, FreeServe is rumoured to be kicking off a toll free service within the next few weeks, with rivals Breathe and LineOne not far behind. Each service seems to have different strings attached to it (for example, NTL asks that you spend £10 on voice calls, LineOne ask £5, and so on) but, essentially, it's free Internet access all round.

AltaVista was splashed across the front pages last month with the introduction of a free ISP service that asks punters for nothing more than an initial setup fee of £30 - less than the cost of a game. It's nothing new, mind: they did the same thing in the US last year to the same level of applause. Although limited to 500,000 lucky

UK customers during its rollout period, this restriction will ensure a higher level of service than one might expect elsewhere. And if you can't climb aboard with AltaVista, Lycos are rumoured to be setting sail on a similar voyage within a matter of weeks.

On the subject of BT, the telco monster has announced unmetered access no fewer than three times within the last five months, and on each occasion has failed to deliver the goods. When you consider the company's size, its profits, and the fact that our American friends pay around 20 bucks a month, BT's schemes were altogether disheartening. They ranged from expensive to confusing, with prices being slashed and services being hastily renamed in response to the AltaVista and NTL announcements.

Unfortunately, it's almost impossible to draw a conclusion from all this. So many questions remain unanswered, with many of the new services still waiting in the wings; there's also the question of exactly how much broadband access (eg ADSL) will cost. Additionally, BT has also made a promise to open up the local loop in July of 2001, which, if they stay true to their word, will have a serious impact on the UK telco market.

Thus our best advice is simply to keep your eyes open for freebie treats. Many of today's unmetered, flat fee offerings are completely genuine - and they work just as well as the connection you have now. Suck 'em and see, and if you don't like what you get, go suck on something else. The only ones to lose are the ISPs themselves. **EW**

DOG FIGHT

DOGMEAT

YOUR EQUIPMENT IS OBSOLETE AND THE BLACK GUARD ARE ON YOUR TAIL. SO WHAT YOU BONNA DO ABOUT IT?



CRASHING THROUGH WINDOWS

Is Microsoft's dominance of the PC at an end? Is Linux really better than Windows? More to the point, WTF is Linux? *Phil Wand* investigates



SPECIAL REPORT

For close on 20 years I have watched Microsoft peddle inferior technology with slick marketing, destroy competitors with dirty tricks, and buy its way out of trouble. Like most people in the know, I grumbled about it to colleagues. I expressed my resistance to Redmond by refusing to use Microsoft products, and by helping develop alternative open-source software. But in the end, if software consumers remained oblivious, what could be done?"

Eric S. Raymond, founder of OpenSource.org

Developed by hairy hacker Linus Torvalds back in 1991 and by scores of unpaid volunteers ever since, Linux is perhaps the most stable, reliable and robust operating system available for your home PC. Its bulletproof networking forms the backbone of websites, email gateways, FTP servers and news

servers in ISPs across the planet. Like Windows 98 it sports a graphical user interface, and recognises all the latest hardware inside your machine, including

“Linux does Internet and networking with its eyes closed – good news when you consider the advancing army of broadband connections”

your sound card, modem, 3D accelerator and DVD drive. Unlike Windows 98, it features true multitasking, support for dual CPUs, and is capable of pooling the processing power of all computers hooked up to your network. Yet as a gamer you've probably never used it.

WINDOWS BLDWS

Most of you feel quite at home with Windows. Hell, we're quite at home with Windows. But that doesn't mean we're happy with it. We moan every time it crashes and valuable work gets trashed. We smack the keyboard in frustration when a game bombs out

and leaves us with icons the size of house bricks. And hey, isn't it supposed to multitask? When we've tested its mettle, it's always jarred to a halt. It's also supposed to switch between applications seamlessly – but when was the last time you flipped from *Half-Life* to *Grand Prix 2000* and back to *Half-Life* again?

Modern Linux games are run from a graphical foundation, such as the K Desktop Environment (KDE). This endows the underlying text interface with all the attributes and accoutrements of a fully-fledged Graphical User Interface (GUI). Each program is treated as a unique, background process and, in the unlikely event of it giving you grief, you can kill it with consummate ease, and rest assured that it's unlikely to affect the rest of the system.

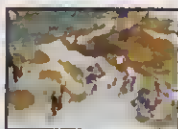
DO YOU NEED IT?

As a platform for gamers, Linux is maturing at an amazing rate. Heavyweight developers such as id

GAMES FOR LINUX

Linux games are multitudinous, ranging from multiplayer *Tetris* clones to *Unreal Tournament*, with many professional-looking titles available for nowt. As inveterate scroungers, we're sure you'll agree that this makes the whole Linux 'thing' that much more appealing – especially if, when you install the system, you get to keep your current Windows setup.

So, to give you a wee taster of the fun to come, we've selected some of the more popular PC titles that have Linux client counterparts. Also, remember that many games not listed here have 'server only' ports (ie you can't actually play the game, merely act as a multiplayer host), Valve's *Half-Life* being the most obvious example.



MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

More information at www.lokigames.com

Real-time strategy game with a fantasy plot. The Linux port

has been available for a little while now and is apparently a dead-ringer for the PC version.

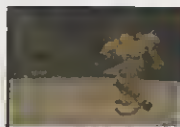


UNREAL TOURNAMENT

More information at www.unrealtournament.com

Our online supergame of the moment has both a Linux client

and server available for it. The client is indistinguishable from the Windows version – if anything, it's smoother.

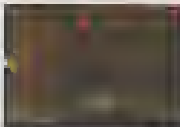


HEAVY GEAR II

More information at www.activision.com

Big robot action in the 62nd century. It shows Activision's

commitment to the Linux platform, which is good news for the games community.

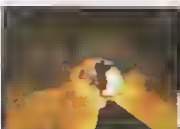


QUAKE, QUAKEWORLD, QUAKE II

More information at linuxquake.com

Although a little too sepi for our liking, these three represent

id Software's most popular titles, and support from the Linux community can only help prolong that.

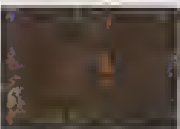


QUAKE III ARENA

More information at www.lokigames.com

What was once the mould for every first-person game is now

sporting middle age spread. Linux developers should tone things up with free tools and mods.



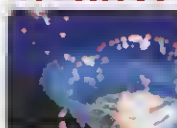
HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III

More information at www.lokigames.com

With so many action blasters being converted to Linux, it's nice

to see this addictive strategy game being ported over.

AND SOME LITTLE KNOWN HOTSHOTS

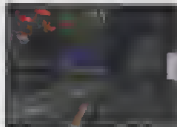


PARSEC

More information at www.parsec.org

Multiplayer, cross-platform, 3D online space combat game. Like

Linux, it's non-commercial. The development team has been working on the project since 1996, and the latest brace of screenshots look simply stunning.



LINUX ODDM

More information at lxdoom.linuxgames.com

Come back to *Doom* after *Quake*, *Unreal* and *Half-Life* and you'll

feel crippled by the restricted player controls. But there's still so much to this game, its trump card being co-operative multiplayer.



XMAME

More information at x.mame.net

An OpenGL and 3dfx GLIDE version arcade emulator

par excellence, *Multi Arcade Machine Emulator* or *MAME* for short. *XMAME* runs in 3D accelerated mode under *X-Windows*, with benefits including full scaling (the screen can be scaled to any size) and has bi-linear filtering.



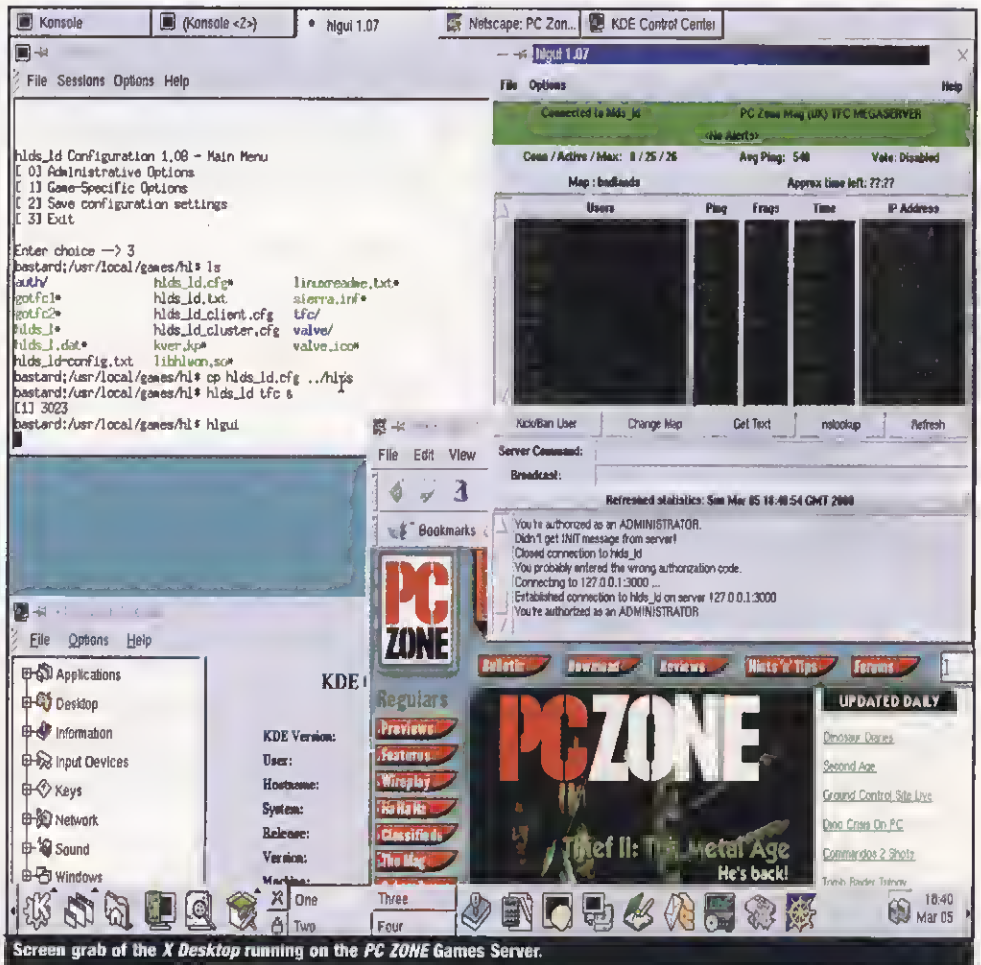
Linus Torvalds, Inventor of Linux.

Software, Epic and Activision are treating it seriously, with John Carmack stating publicly that he has an "increasing involvement" with said Operating System. Titles such as *Quake III Arena* and *Heavy Gear II* are already shipping in the States and, more importantly, they're

dead ringers for their PC counterparts. So you certainly won't be losing anything if you decide to make the switch - same house, firmer foundations, no subsidence.

So, should you install it? In a word, *yes!* Look at it this way. Your relationship with Windows will be limited to a series of routine tasks: write a letter, go online, check for email, go surfing, download a file, steal some MP3s, play a game. Linux can do *all* these things as well. Additionally, it does Internet and networking with its eyes closed - good news when you consider the advancing army of broadband connections (cable, ADSL). You'll soon be able to leave your Linux box on day and night while it runs your own web, mail and game servers.

Importantly for you, many commercial versions bundle third-party tools, which allow you to run Windows and Linux *side by side on the same hard drive*. This means you lose nothing. You get to keep the familiarity of Microsoft, while at the same time benefiting from a 'real' operating system and its proven reliability. When you consider that the graphical front end is now more like Windows than Windows is, there's very little reason not to try Linux. And it's free. [E]



Screen grab of the X Desktop running on the PC ZONE Games Server.

BLUFFER'S Guide to...

LINUX

What is Linux?

Linux is a free, publicly developed, UNIX-type operating system. Its core code or 'kernel' was originally developed to run on home PCs by a Finnish hacker called Linus Torvalds at the University of Helsinki. It can now be found running on a variety of hardware platforms including Macintosh, Sun Sparc, DEC Alpha, and even the Amiga.

What's the big deal?

Aside from the fact that it doesn't cost a bean, install Linux on your PC and you'll have everything you could possibly want from an operating system: bullet-proof multitasking; tried and tested networking; a graphical interface and support for all the latest OpenGL video hardware. If you thought Linux was all black screens and grey text, think again.

Does it *never* crash?

Generally speaking, Linux is rock solid. Linux servers, providing the power behind many of the Web's most popular

sites, are fully capable of running for years without the need for a reboot - let alone a jab at the reset button. Some of the more popular screen savers include the infamous BSOD (Blue Screen Of Death) which pokes fun at Windows errors. Needless to say, it's still possible to lock up a Linux box.

How do you say it?

It's pronounced 'Lee-nooks', after its inventor. Calling it 'Lie-nucks' will only elicit sniggering from those 'in the know'.

Where can I get it?

There are a number of distributions, or different flavours of the Linux kernel. *Slackware* Linux is available from www.cdrom.com, *Red Hat* from www.redhat.com, *OpenLinux* from www Caldera.com, *SuSE* from www.suse.com. Linux Online at www.linux.org maintains a list of sites where you can download the product online.

Where can I find out more about Linux?

The best place to look is www.linuxlinks.com

Base-building ability? WASTE OF TIME

Front-line action preferred? SIGN UP NOW

ENLIST NOW AT
www.groundcontrol1.com

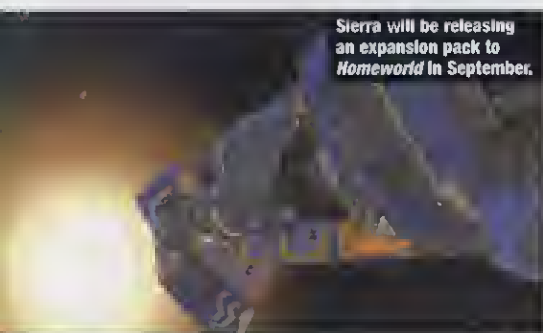
GROUND CONTROL

COMING SOON
PURE ACTION • PURE TACTICS • PURE AND SIMPLE

SIERRA

HOMEWORLD BOUND

With two new releases on the way the future looks bright for space admirals



Sierra will be releasing an expansion pack to *Homeworld* in September.

After the success of *Homeworld*, it was always going to be just a matter of time before we saw a host of look-alikes hitting the shelves. And although *Homeworld* did it first, two other development teams - Strategy First and Digital Anvil - will each be hoping they can do it better.

Slated for a September release is *O.R.B* (standing for *Off-world Resource Base*), from Strategy First. Graphically, although it bears a very close resemblance to *Homeworld*, the game will feature a touch more in the way of exploration and resource management. Set amongst a disputed resource-rich asteroid belt, there will be two sides to choose from, for whom you will have to command a fleet, gather minerals and search for alien technologies. By filling the game with rocky outposts, the designers hope to give the game some terrain for players to

make use of - for instance, we'll be able to create bases from which attacks can be made.

Out later, but certainly looking the more impressive is Digital Anvil's *Conquest: Frontier Wars*.

Set in 2151, humans uncover unknown technologies in far off space systems. This leads to the discovery of an alien insect race and subsequently a war ensues. With galactic domination the key, you will have to manage resources and battles, indulge in scientific research and interact with your galactic counterparts. Unlike the current benchmark that *Homeworld* has set for in-space real-time strategy, *Conquest* will be a two-axis game (you won't be able to send ships up or down), it should prove to be both visually stunning and easy to master.

“Although these titles all look impressive, it's hard not to think that they're all a little too similar”

Although these titles all look impressive, it's hard not to think that they're all a little too similar, both to each other and to *Homeworld*, for which Sierra is releasing an expansion pack called *Cataclysm* in September. However, with developers such as Digital Anvil working in the genre, there must surely be plenty to look forward to in the future of space-based RTS games.

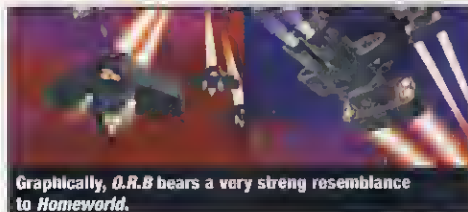
THE NEXT GENERATION

O.R.B

Developer Strategy First

Publisher TBA

Website www.strategyfirst.com



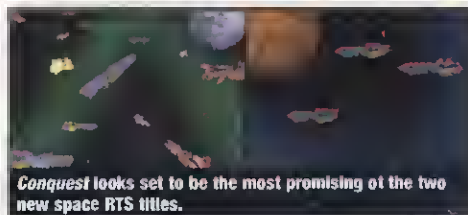
Graphically, *O.R.B* bears a very strong resemblance to *Homeworld*.

CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS

Developer Digital Anvil

Publisher Microsoft

Website www.digitalanvil.com



Conquest looks set to be the most promising of the two new space RTS titles.

MONEY SHOTS

Who says that you can't make a living out of playing games? Unbeknown to many people, the world of professional computer gaming, which is comparatively huge in the US, is slowly growing in the UK. It was only recently that Sujoy Roy became the UK's first professional gamer (securing a lucrative sponsorship deal) and he's sure to be the first of many.

Although there is no professional league in this country, there is one in the US. An organisation called the CPL, (the Cyberathlete Professional League), is a highly popular and established gaming circuit that organises many competitions throughout the US. Its next contest, The Razer CPL, will be offering a staggering US\$100,000

in prize money. It's set to be the single largest prize purse in the history of computer gaming. Staged in Dallas, Texas, 512 contestants will battle it out on *Quake III Arena* in an attempt to win a share of the cash.

Up until now, any UK gamers who wanted take part in CPL competitions have had to fund themselves. However, thanks to a recent Gameplay sponsored qualifying contest at The Playing Fields, one lucky *Quake III* ace from this country is flying out to compete in the finals, in an all expenses paid trip.

Held on Sunday February 20, the qualifying contest was won by Chris Hoare (or [UNR] Blokey) from Brighton, who by the time you read this will have returned from the

US, either burdened with cash or sorrow. Keep up to date with the scores on this and any future tournaments at www.theplayingfields.co.uk.

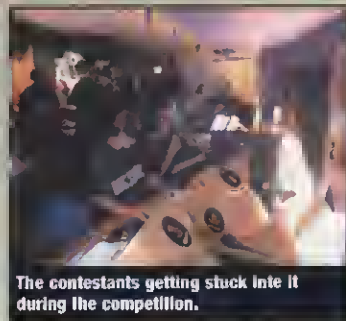
If you think that you might like to put your skills to the test, you can look forward to the second annual *UK PC Games Championships*, which will be held sometime this summer. Rest assured that it will be an even bigger and better event than last years, with more than £10,000 in prizes this time around. No dates have been arranged as yet, but budding champions should start practising now. Who knows, if you prove to be any good, this time next year you may just be earning a living playing games.



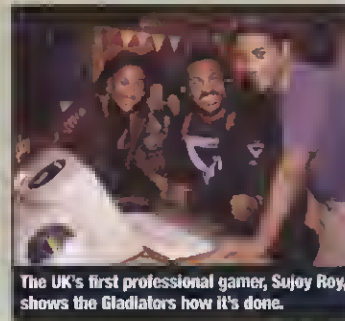
Gladlators, Saracen and Rebel, with winner Chris Hoare at The Playing Fields.



The qualifying heats at The Playing Fields were watched on giant screens.



The contestants getting stuck into it during the competition.



The UK's first professional gamer, Sujoy Roy, shows the Gladlators how it's done.

TEAM TALK

A quick chat with the part-timers who make games for love not money



Who are you and what are you working on?
Chris Giggins: We are a group of *Total Annihilation* fans from around

the world, working on a *Star Wars* total conversion (TC). You can find out more by visiting <http://tauniverse.com/swta/>.

Nick Smith: Everything in the *Total Annihilation* game will be replaced. The final version will include new units, terrain, maps, missions, sounds and interface. **How many people are working on the project?**

Chris: The project has been going for around two years, so lots of people have worked on it over time. Currently there are around eight of us. We have members all around Europe and in the US. I guess you could call us an international organisation really.

Nick: Throughout the two years we have probably had 30 members. The current team we are left with though are some of the most respected and

able people in the *Total Annihilation* third-party development community.

What do you do for a living and how much time do you devote to *Star Wars TA*?

Chris: I'm a student, just about to take my A-Levels. I have spent far too much time on this project and unfortunately nowhere near enough on my coursework...

When will it be finished?

Chris: We are hoping to get the bulk of the release out by Easter.

Nick: We plan to release several packs. We hope that the first will be ready by April; this will contain all the 'core' units, eg the buildings to get your base up and running and a few low-level factories so there is something to fight with. We then plan to build on that with add-on packs containing new factories and units, probably on a monthly or bimonthly basis.

What are your hopes for *SWTA*?

Chris: That it becomes a must-have for all *Star Wars* fans, and an alternative for *Force Commander*.

Nick: Ideally I would like it to be considered as good as, if not better

than, *Force Commander*. At the end of the day though, we all just love the support of the community.

What would be your ideal job in the games industry?

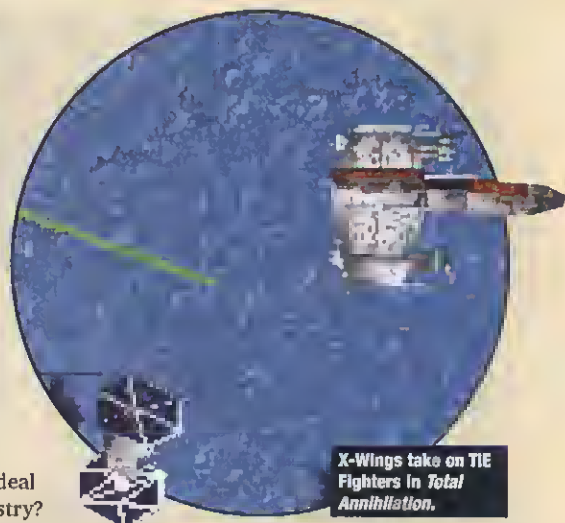
Chris: A designer for LucasArts, where I could work on an officially licensed *Star Wars* game.

Nick: Like a lot of people I think I'd be quite happy being a games tester. I'm not fussy - anywhere that will have me.

What games are you looking forward to?

Chris: I'm looking forward to playing *Force Commander*, so that we can 'borrow' their new vehicles for *SWTA*. I'm also really looking forward to *Obi-Wan*.

Nick: Apart from the obvious - *Force Commander* - I am also an avid *X-Com*



X-Wings take on TIE Fighters in *Total Annihilation*.

fan, so I am really looking forward to *Alliance*. Also *WarCraft III* should be quite interesting.

What do the LucasArts folk think of your work? Have they put any pressure on you yet?

Chris: There has been no contact yet and I can't see there being a problem. We are not charging for it, and it's using an engine that is more than two years old. If they are worried that *SWTA* will take any sales away from *Force Commander*, then they should look at their own development team.

Ouch!



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Many of the spaceships are done, but we've yet to see any moving.

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MAYDAY FOR FR

The end of capitalism in gaming, or just another here today gone tomorrow Internet start-up? Paul Presley cashes in

The image is a curious one. At face value the office looks like that of any typical games developer, lots of young 20-somethings sat at computer desks covered with gaming paraphernalia. Look a little deeper though and you spot the differences. More people on the telephone dealing with more technical enquiries than is usual. More screens displaying webpages, rather than 3D wire-frame models. And more women. Definitely more women than is normal for a games developer. That's because Pure Entertainment has undergone quite a radical change in the past year. The company most well known for its popular console titles hasn't stopped coding games entirely, but the focus has definitely shifted from developer to publisher, but a publisher with a difference. Pure Entertainment, you see, is giving its games away - free. And not just its own games. Having signed a deal to plunder Take 2 Interactive's back catalogue, it'll also be giving away classic titles such as *Grand Theft Auto* and *Hidden & Dangerous* when its website, Freeloader.com, goes live at the beginning of May.



CATCH FREE?

"What a lot of people outside of the industry don't realise is that a lot of companies are just haemorrhaging money on games," explains Harry Holmwood, chief executive of Pure Entertainment. "In between the developer and the consumer are a lot of middle men - the publishers, distributors, retailers, agents and so on. The developers might get one or two pounds from each sale of a £30 game, the rest goes on all the overheads and the profit margins of the retailers. A lot of developers have been speaking about this for a long time now; if you can cut those people out then you can sell the games for a much lower price. We looked into it and it turned out that you can not only do it for a much lower price, you can actually give them away."

So where does the money come from? The answer is simple for Holmwood - advertising. "The money you can make from advertising on the website is enough to allow you to distribute the games and make a profit." Initially, however, Pure had to raise and invest a sizeable chunk of cash by floating on the stock exchange last year. As well as upping its profile by being among the first game developer to go public, it managed to raise over

£11 million and has seen the value of its shares continue to climb ever since.

Freeloader.com works by allowing gamers to download their favourite titles in modified and highly compressed bite-sized chunks. With *Hidden & Dangerous*, for example, you would first take the main engine and then just the first levels of whichever campaign you choose, downloading the rest as and when you need them. *GTA* has had the music removed and is split into the three main cities. All the while you're downloading the game, the website's targeted advertising will be displayed, providing Pure Entertainment with its revenue.

It still has to attract the customers in the first place though. "This is the first time anyone on the planet has given away premium games for nothing and we've got a big, big marketing spend to tell people this. Come May you simply won't be able to get away from Freeloader.com," grins Holmwood. "We're not just about marketing the games, we're selling the whole concept of free, downloadable software."

FREE SPACE

There are plans to take this a step further by including the advertising in the actual game, but as Pure's Lead Designer Claude Thomas is keen to point out, it shouldn't be at the expense of the

FREE FOR ALL

At the moment Pure Entertainment has announced just six of the games that will be available free when the site launches on May 1. We can perhaps guess what titles might be on offer in the future: *Spec Ops*, *Wild Metal Country* and *Nocturne* - all good games you probab

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

Developer Illusion Softworks

Available Engine code and first campaign (10Mb) available from May 1, with missions (1Mb each) to be released every week thereafter.

Bugs - *Hidden & Dangerous* was full of them. It's also full of Germans, which along with the most varied environments and a near-perfect mix of action and strategy, makes it one of the best games you can buy today, but soon won't have to.



RAT ATTACK

Developer Pure Entertainment

Available Download the engine and first level (5Mb) from May 1, then get new levels at 2Mb each.

Originally a console game, Pure has ported over its cartoon vermin-blasting puzzler so we can freely enjoy it. Thankfully, rather than having to endure blocky console graphics, we can look forward to some PC hardware accelerated ones. Feel free to give some verbal to anyone who bought the N64 version.

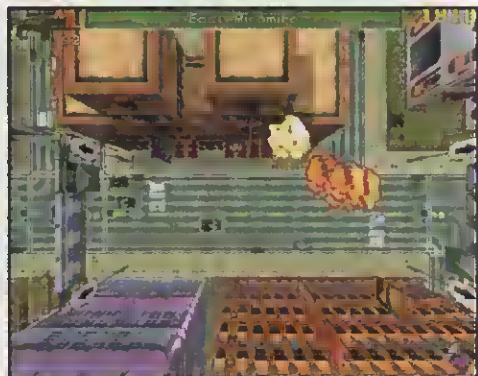


GRAND THEFT AUTO

Developer DMA Design

Available Engine code (6Mb) and all three cities available from May 1.

A game that needs no introduction - steal cars, deliver packages and kill the coppers across three US-style cities. Currently you can buy it for a tenner in your local games emporium, and if you can live without the music, you'd want to save your money for that new Steps album. Or something.



FREELOADER.COM

gameplay: "We're looking at a lot of ideas for this, but the most important thing is not to make it annoying for the player. The Diesel advertising in *G-Police* is a good example of how we would like to do it, but it takes a lot of work to make sure you get it just right. We won't be putting any in our first few games as we haven't got it precisely defined yet."

Among the games pencilled in for the launch are the aforementioned *Take 2* hits, a conversion of Pure's own PlayStation and N64 action game *Rat Attack*, *Pure Tennis*, a cartoon-style sports sim and, most notably of all, *Halcyon Sun*, the impressive-looking 3D space sim previously known as *Jump Runner*. Also in the works is a persistent online world (in the same manner as *Ultima Online* or *EverQuest* – although Pure refused to go into detail about this).

FREE WILLY

The future of Freeloader.com is a difficult one to predict. Providing it maintains a steady stream of quality titles things should be OK. The aim presently is to have at least 50 quality products on offer within the first few months, and to further this end Pure has been busy signing up a wealth of previously under-appreciated European and foreign development teams. "There's a lot of talent out there in places like the Czech

Republic, Russia, Spain and Italy that goes unnoticed," assures Holmwood. "Look at *Hidden & Dangerous*. That was done in the Czech Republic by a team that was unknown. We've got a lot of producers out there around the world, so that when the right product comes up, we can get to it." The software houses are keen to get involved and sign distribution deals for existing titles as well.



"This is the first time anyone on the planet has given away premium games for nothing. Come May you simply won't be able to get away from Freeloader.com"

HARRY HOLMWOOD, PURE ENTERTAINMENT

"About 90 per cent have welcomed us and ten per cent are terrified of us," Holmwood laughs. "Everyone knows that online distribution is the way it's going to go. It makes so much sense. The more forward-thinking publishers are coming onboard with us. *Take 2* is the first, but it's by no means the only one talking to us."

The other step is to ensure the games are well supported after their release, in the form of constantly updated patches, new levels, skins and mods, and a vibrant sense of a gaming community. Message boards and chat forums are planned for the future and feedback on the games is being actively encouraged. The recent announcements of various free Internet connection deals from companies such as BT and NTL couldn't have come at a better time. In one sense, the telcos have done part of Pure's job of persuading people to spend lengthy periods of time online. Their task now is to make sure that Freeloader.com is the site capitalising on that time.

freeloader.com

freeloader.com

Well it's got to be worth a look, at least.

promised a shedload more – perhaps 40 – with a steady stream to be rolled-out over the coming months. Considering the deal with *Take 2*, you missed out on for various reasons, which you probably wouldn't have done had you been able to get them for now!

HALCYON SUN

Developer Glass Ghost

Available Engine code (10Mb) available early summer, with new missions and story arcs (2Mb) available every two weeks.

The game previously known as *Jump Runner* and talked about back in *PCZ #79*, *Halcyon Sun* has blossomed into a promising space combat sim, which combines a rich story, fast action and fancy graphics. Freer than *FreeSpace* and just as spacey.



PURE TENNIS

Developer Pure Entertainment

Available Download engine code with one court (5Mb), then further courts and characters (1Mb each). The best thing about real tennis are the strawberries and pictures of Anna Kournikova scratching her arse. Making its debut in May though, *Pure Tennis* may come a close second, as it turns rackets into weapons in an intriguing mix of tennis and Pong. Hopefully it will be better than both.



GTA: LONDON 1969

Developer DMA Design

Available The same as *Grand Theft Auto*, except no need to download engine code. *GTA* reaches back to the swinging '60s in this mission pack for the original joyriding crime classic. Do it all over again, but through the streets of London. It was disappointing when it originally came out, but that was when we had to shell out £20 for it. Amazingly Sold Out re-released it last month for a tenner. Doh.



The Man who KNOWS

GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS

Following last month's smuf special, it has been revealed that a game is being developed featuring the ample charms of erstwhile *Baywatch* bimbo **Pamela Anderson Lee**. Based around Pammie's latest show, *VIP*, the game represents something of a departure for the developers at **Kaiisto Entertainment**, the team responsible for *Nightmare Creatures 2*. In *VIP*, Anderson Lee stars as **Vallery Irons**, a girl who finds herself propelled into the unlikely role of bodyguard to some of California's biggest stars, a role that fans will be able to re-enact when the game is released by **Ubi Soft** at the end of the year. Expect plenty of copies to be available.

Still on the subject of buxom lasses, the tedious saga of the *Tomb Raider* movie has taken a further moribund twist with the announcement in *Variety* magazine that Oscar-nominated **Angelina Jolie** is in final negotiations to star in the live-action **Paramount** film. Allegedly set to begin production this summer, the screenplay has been penned by several scribes, including the *Face/Off* team of **Michael Werb** and **Michael Colleary**. I've never heard of them, although director **Simon West** was responsible for both *The General's Daughter* and *Con Air*.

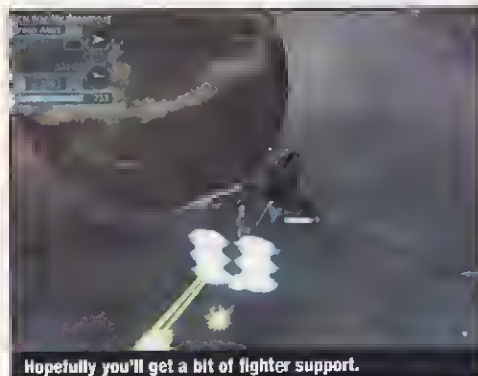
Meanwhile, former *Tomb Raider* model **Nell McAndrew** was recently spotted at the *Maxim Women Of The Year Awards*, a gala occasion held at London's swanky **Park Lane Hotel**. Fighting off the attentions of **Caprice**, **Cat Deeley**, and **Lindsey** out of *Brookside*, I took the opportunity to ask her some of the most inane questions ever committed to tape. What was the best thing about dressing up as Lara? "Ooh, I think wearing all that rubber, definitely." And the worst? "Sweating in all that rubber." Funniest story? "I was in Madrid and we were running about the street filming for the *News At Ten*, so I was pretending to be Lara Croft and I actually ran into two policemen, and I was there with two guns in my hand and I actually nearly got arrested. It's funny now, but it wasn't at the time." What do you think of the new Lara? "I don't know her. I mean Lara Croft's Lara Croft, isn't it? I don't know what she's like, I know that she's got the long dark hair so she probably looks more like Lara Croft in real life than I do. But I actually quite liked the fact that I had a wig because if I mean that I could forget about it at the end of the day and take it off and be somebody different." So what are you doing now? *It's A Knockout*? "That starts in the summer, and I'm now the Triumph girl for 2000 as well, so lots of free bras and pants."

On that bombshell, I escorted Nell to the aftershow party at nearby **Tokyo Joe's**, where she spent the evening chatting to the likes of **Jo Guest**, while I had a fight with **Joe Mangle** out of *Neighbours*, who was duly escorted from the building.

Funny how things turn out.



You won't have to worry about shield depletion, enemy fire will overload them.



Hopefully you'll get a bit of fighter support.



No Newtonian physics model in this game.

RED STORM REACH FOR THE STARS

From the makers of *Rainbow Six* comes the latest in combat space sims

Having developed a political thriller, cornered the market for tactical shooters and dabbled in real and turn-based strategy, jack-of-all-trades developer Red Storm plans to take space combat to the next level with *UFS Vanguard*.

Due to be released this summer, *UFS Vanguard* centres not on dogfighting, but on huge capital ship combat as players are given command of a series of massive spaceships in the war against the Hierarchy Of Man, a bunch of religious nutters.

Unlike the recent *Independence War* and the soon to be released *Klingon Academy*, *Vanguard* will utilise a third-person view, with control via the keyboard and mouse. Players will be unable to steer the ship directly, it is only by clicking out orders to your crew via the three main interfaces

that you'll be able to get through aff of the 20 planned missions.

Success throughout the game is rewarded with promotion onto bigger and better ships, three types in total, finally ending up aboard a massive Warrior Class Dreadnought.

Against *UFS Vanguard*, apart from the already mentioned *Klingon Academy*, we'll soon have *Battlecruiser Millenium*, which apart from being all-encompassing and life-sapping, is certain to be aimed at the hardcore space fan. *UFS Vanguard* however will be more forgiving.

The difficulty with these types of games is trying to make the player feel as if they're flying a big spacecraft. By taking you out of the pilot seat however, Red Storm has a good chance of getting it right. We shall see.

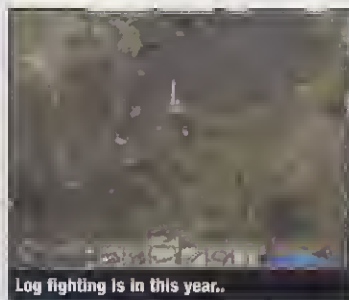
DIVINE RPG

As if the RPG genre wasn't crowded enough at the moment, Larian Studios' latest game *Divinity: The Sword of Lies* is set to further add to the congestion. Due out in the autumn, players control a wizard's apprentice who must fight and cast their way through the game.

Larian is planning to make the gameworld of *Divinity* between 7,000 and 14,000 screens large, filling it with caverns, dungeons, rivers, forests, villages and just about every bearded fantasy cliché you care to mention.

What may make *Divinity* worth waiting for – apart from the fact it looks rather nice – is a skill system called 'The Research Plate'. This will enable the player to learn new skills pretty much unheard of outside O&O Anonymous meetings, your ability to run with a two-handed sword for instance.

With it's huge gameworld, and innovative features, *Divinity: The Sword of Lies* has a good chance of rising above the crowd. However, with so much competition around, it'll probably need a leg-up from a big UK publisher. The search is on.



Log fighting is in this year.

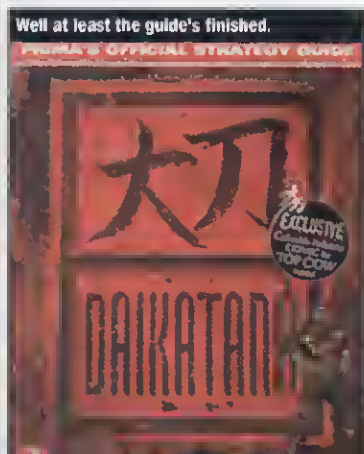


As if by magic, the shopkeeper appeared.

DAIKATANA FUN

Much hilarity ensued in the ZONE office recently when we were offered the opportunity to run a competition to win, wait for it, 20 copies of the *Official Daikatana Strategy Guide*. The guide it seems was completed before the actual game, which although not unusual in many cases, isn't quite as funny either. The fact that John Romero's girlfriend (level designer Stevie 'Killcreek' Case) will also make it into the guide, draped across a wipe-clean poster, just about finished us off. We laughed and laughed and laughed some more. Needless to say, if you want one of these guides you'll have to wait until the game is released.

Of *Daikatana* itself, there's a very good chance that we will review it next issue. Apparently, the *Daikatana* team has booked its holiday, in fact they may even be on the beach sipping margaritas as you read this. Whether they'll be justifiably smug or hiding under their beach towels, we shall see when – and it – the game arrives.



Well at least the guide's finished.

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ Contrary to some reports, there are no plans to port the Bitmap Brothers' *Speedball 2100* to PC, as yet. Boo. **++STOP++** Novologic's action strategy game *Maximum Overkill*, which was to be released this summer, has been put on hold while the developer concentrates on finishing up the space combat title *Tachyon: The Fringe*. **++STOP++** Although Revolution Software is working on a third *Broken Sword* adventure, there are no plans to bring it to the PC yet. Revolution is however planning a Christmas release of *In Cold Blood*, a sci-fi spy adventure set in Russia. **++STOP++** A *Diablo II* expansion pack is scheduled for a September release. **++STOP++** The lights have gone out at UK-based Pumpkin Studios, developer of 3D strategy classic *WarZone 2100*, after Eidos pulled the plug on the 3D action adventure *Saboteur*. **++STOP++** An expansion for *The Sims* is expected in the summer. Details next issue. **++STOP++** Finally, just as the magazine is being put to bed, LucasArts goes and announces that an online *Star Wars* game, a role-playing game no less, is in development. As speculated, *EverQuest* creator Verant will co-develop the game and it will be out some time next year. **++ENDS**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

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GOI forces bomb a NOO cricket club.

C&C RENEGADE (Westwood)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: July 2000

Westwood has until now been somewhat frugal about releasing information (especially screen shots) about its eagerly anticipated third-person action title *C&C Renegade*. However, it has released one more in game shot (seen here), and has answered some questions we asked about the game: Starting midway through the era of the first *C&C* game, *Renegade* will be story driven, featuring familiar characters such as Or Mobius. There will be an array of weaponry for your commando to use, including C4 charges and a sniper rifle, and you will also be able to drive up to twelve vehicles from the *C&C* games, including Orcas, Flame Tanks, Rocket Bikes and Harvesters. Every one of these will have individual physics engines. Enemy AI will be highly intelligent, reacting to both sight and sound, and shooting them in different body parts will cause varying reactions. All these features are backed up by an excellent graphics engine, which uses a new lighting effect called Radiosity. This allows soft shadows, indirect illumination and colour bleeding between surfaces. Westwood will now wait until E3 in the summer to show us more, and frankly, we can't wait.

NOW OUT – TBC

B-17 II: THE MIGHTY EIGHTH (Hasbro)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: March 2000

The new release date for Hasbro's WWII tight sim is May 12. This is as much due to the developer Wayward Design being bought out by Rage, as it is with extended play testing. The game is now in the final stages of testing, with the last few bugs being ironed out. There is after all nothing worse than a flawed masterpiece. After seeing *B-17 II: The Mighty Eighth* in action earlier this month though, it looks set to be anything but flawed, and almost certainly a masterpiece.

NOW OUT – May

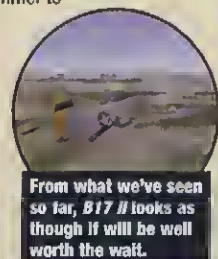
DUKE NUKEM FOREVER (3D Realms)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Spring 2000

Developer 3D Realms has always been notoriously tight-lipped about releasing information on its forthcoming games, and *Duke Nukem Forever* is no exception. New screens and details are hard to come by, but what we do know is that it's unlikely we'll see this great looking sequel to the pre-*Quake* classic before the autumn. The latest delay is a financial one, while 3D Realms is flush, publisher GT Interactive is no more and is now owned by Infogrames.

NOW OUT – TBC



From what we've seen so far, *B17 II* looks as though it will be well worth the wait.

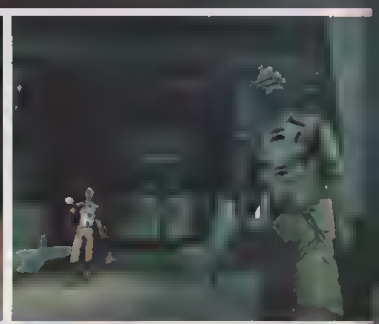
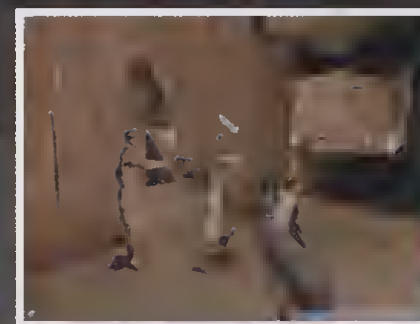
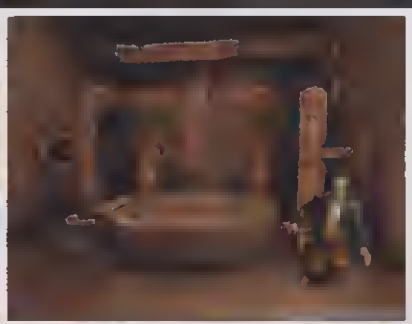
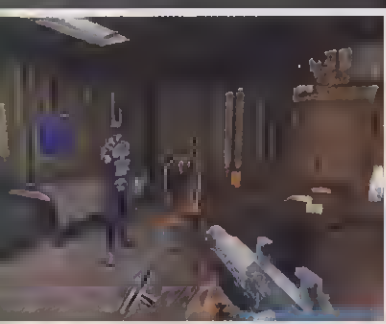


Where did I put that other cigar?



HOTSHOTS

We were secretly hoping that *Deus Ex* would be coming in for review this issue. But alas not. What we did get from developer Ion Storm, however, are some brand new screenshots. And here they are...

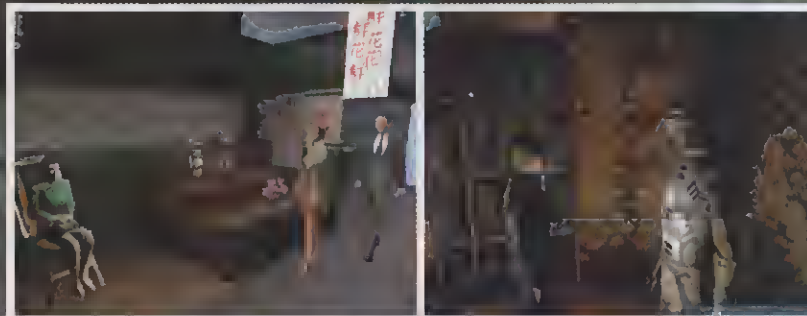


DEUS EX

★ Eidos • Out May/June

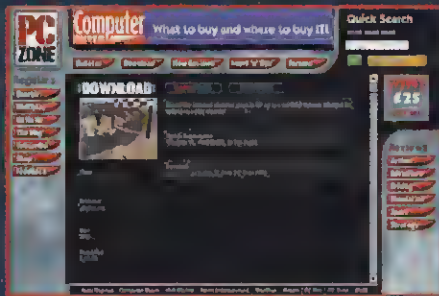
Last month's interview with the legendary Warren Spector told us a great many things about his forthcoming first-person adventure *Deus Ex*: we were shown a very polished 3D game based on the *Unreal* engine. We saw futuristic role-playing on a par with the current benchmark *System Shock 2*, and we saw just how much a developer can be excited by his own game. What we didn't tell you about was the story behind *Deus Ex*.

Set just a few years into the future, the world of *Deus Ex* is very similar to current-day Brazil – but without the football. The rich are sinking rich, the poor just stinking, with the gulf between them as wide as the Pacific. With this polarisation in the distribution of wealth, governments across the world hold but a tenuous grasp on power, with corruption and greed rife and the unwashed masses ready to fight back. With organised crime running much of the world, it's all a mite depressing really. While this one-dimensional background is enough for most games, *Deus Ex* ups things considerably by adding a shadowy government organisation, intent on cleaning up the world. Then there is the mystery of the Grey Death – very *X-Files*. The truth is out there, and it'll be here next month.





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PROJECT



IGI

Details of the biggest eye-opener at last year's ECTS have been strictly on a need to know basis. Until now, that is. **Mark Hill** went in to steal all the latest information. Pity he never got to use that cyanide pill...

Who needs a sun belt? Just stand right there.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Interloop Studio
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.eidos.co.uk
OUT Late 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's the PC's answer to *GoldenEye*
- ★ Massive terrains modelled through a fantastic engine
- ★ A mixture of stealth and shoot 'em up
- ★ Political intrigue with secret agents

If something has become obvious in the last year, it's the way first-person shooters are changing. You can no longer make a game set on a space station or alien planet where all you do is run through corridors shooting everything that moves and getting keys to doors. Gamers are

more sophisticated now, they want games with realistic settings (like *Soldier of Fortune* and *Kingpin*) and games that require a more

thoughtful approach (like *Thief* and *SWAT 3*). The only place for mindless shooters is multiplayer titles such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III*, but even in that area you will find *Team Fortress 2* and the *Half-Life* mod *Counter-Strike* introducing a slower more considered approach to the gameplay.

In fact, gamers are so sophisticated now they want fast cars and beautiful

women (and Belgian chocolates), they want to play the roulette in Monaco and muck about with expensive gadgets, they want games like *Project IGI*.

SHAKEN NOT STIRRED

One of the best first-person shooters in the last 10 years is *GoldenEye*, a game that only appeared on the N64. This is clearly wrong. Consoles are no place for FPSs, as the recent conversions of *Quake* on the PlayStation prove; you can't use a mouse for crying out loud. Secret agents are pretty thin on the PC ground, and it's about time the balance was redressed. On the one side we've got the James Bond *Tomorrow Never Dies* game, on the other there's the self-proclaimed "thinker-shooter" *IGI*, where you take on the role of an ex-SAS veteran now working at her majesty's service. Instead of fighting evil pussy-stroking, nuclear bomb-stealing, power crazy organisations, the plot is grounded on a more realistic Frederick Forsyth-style political intrigue. Without giving too much away, the story takes unexpected and complex twists as you're forced to choose between your loyalty to the British Government and your loyalty to individuals. Certain things will happen in some levels that are scripted, so you can expect some pretty spectacular scenes while you're engrossed in the action.

You wouldn't be a secret agent if you didn't get to travel around exotic locations seducing a mixture of femme fatales and doe-eyed girls. Well, at least travelling around exotic locations. In *IGI* you'll get to see plenty of Europe and Africa, as well as going on a trip to the Rocky Mountains and the frosty Murmansk in Russia.

WALK-IN SHOOT-OUT

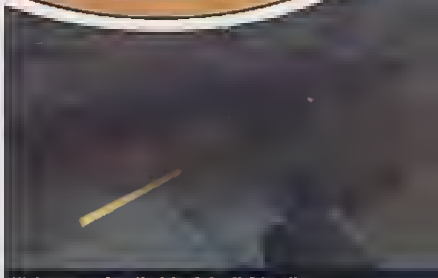
The game's structure is mission based and, although the campaign is essentially linear, the developers have worked hard to ensure the gameplay is as open as possible within each one.

"You go into each mission knowing you've certain objectives to achieve," says project lead Andrew Wensley, "but once you're in there you'll find out that you've got a whole new set of objectives that you can perform." There'll always be more than one way to get things done, and there's a great emphasis on stealth. "What we want the player to do is to arrive at the mission setting, get his binoculars out, zoom in to the structure and figure out the best way to get in without being detected. So you could see a guard moving back and forth, and then a security camera you've got to check out, so you wait until the guard is out of camera range before killing him silently and sneaking through the door. The missions are usually structured so you can sneak your way in and then shoot your way out." So, *Thief* your way in and *Half-Life* your way out. Sounds good to us.

There's a lot of interaction with the environment, so the missions should have their fair share of head-scratching. *System Shock 2* players will be familiar with the importance of avoiding security cameras, and *IGI* has plenty of its own. "You will be able to find control rooms where you can just hack into the security controls and disable all the alarms and cameras for a certain amount of time," says Andrew. Only this time, tripping the alarm won't mean a couple of zombies and monkeys will come looking for you, you'll be alerting a whole base full of soldiers. And helicopters. And guns.

BULLETS HURT

The walls of buildings are real objects in the game world, not just cut off points in the maps, as demonstrated by the fact that bullets tear holes in them. "Bullets really hurt in this game, although it's not quite as irritating as in *Delta Force* where it's a 'one shot and your dead' situation, which can be very annoying at the



We're guessing that tank isn't friendly.



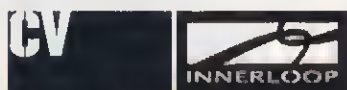
He can almost feel a bullet zooming at him.



One of the game's gorgeous helicopters.



You won't get very far without a car.



INTERLOOP STUDIO

So far Interloop has only developed a flight sim, which might explain why the vehicles look so damn good.

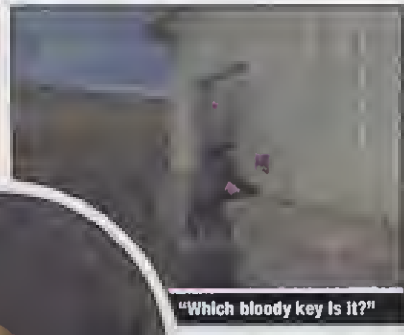
Joint Strike Fighter



He clearly likes climbing ladders. A lot.



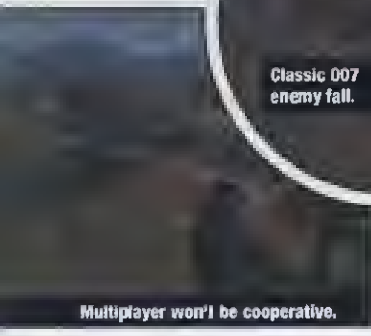
Flashy or what?



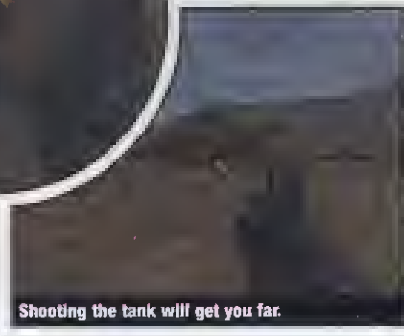
"Which bloody key is it?"



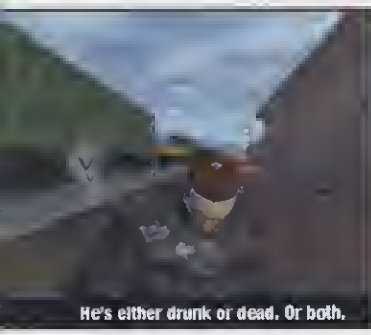
Classic 007 enemy fall.



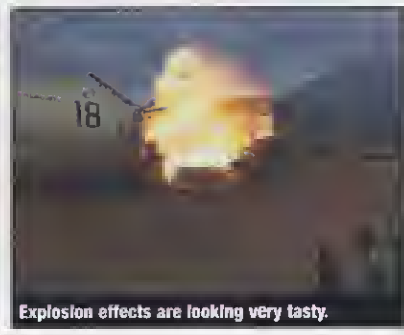
Multiplayer won't be cooperative.



Shooting the tank will get you far.



He's either drunk or dead. Or both.

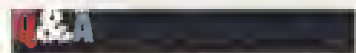


Explosion effects are looking very tasty.

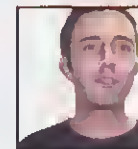
end of a mission just because of one guy you didn't get." To make sure they made the bullets and weapons in the game as realistic as possible the developers went off to a field in Finland (don't ask us why) to fire as many guns as they could get their hands on. To demonstrate, Andrew tripped an alarm that caused a chopper to appear firing its machine gun as he ran into a building. The bullets lanced through the walls as if they were paper and whistled across the room. They looked as if they hurt, they sounded as if they hurt, hell these bullets do hurt. After smugly tapping in the godmode codes, Andrew ran out and gave us a good look at the chopper; it looked as detailed and realistic as you'd expect in the latest and best looking helicopter sims out there. And what's more, there are missions where you actually have to get on to them to fly to other parts of the map. "Vehicles are used frequently in IGI as insertion and extraction methods," says Andrew. "Also, some of the objectives will be to reach a certain ERV (Emergency Rendez-vous) and you ain't gonna get there on foot." And while you won't actually be able to control any of the vehicles, you can use the mounted machine guns and start hosing down the enemies.

A WHIRL IS NOT ENOUGH

Of course, choppers aren't the only vehicles in the game, there are tanks, jets and trains. There's even a scene on a train similar to the one in *Soldier of Fortune*. "In this mission you jump off from a helicopter on to the back of a speeding train. We were really pissed off when we saw *Soldier of Fortune's* train level, which looked very nice. But it was a cheap way of doing in. The train was stationary and it was only the ground that moved to give that realistic impression. What we were able to do in *IGI* was to actually model a moving train which



ANDREW WENSLEY



Project Lead. When he's not busy shooting guns in Finland, Andrew spends most of his time in Norway, where the team is based, pretending that he's not very, very cold.

PCZ What is the first game you ever played?

ANDREW Pong. It was awesome.

PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?

ANDREW Hmm. Toss up between either *Quake* or *GoldenEye*.

PCZ What is the last game you paid for with your own money?

ANDREW *Homeworld*.

PCZ What does IGI stand for?

ANDREW I'm Going In.

PCZ Who is your favourite James Bond?

ANDREW Sean Connery.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight? If so, what happened?

ANDREW Heh-heh.... I'm a lover, not a fighter.

you move on as it speeds through the countryside." We're particularly looking forward to the mission where you get to jump from cable car to cable car at a dizzying height.

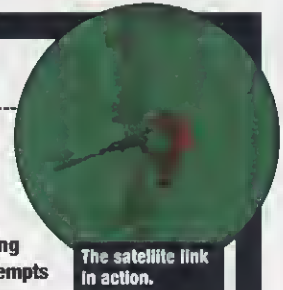
Andrew wasn't joking about not getting to certain places on foot, either. The engine is so advanced they have managed to create a truly massive world, ten million square miles, with some of the maps measuring up to 20 miles long. If you thought the big open maps in *Delta Force 2* were impressive, you ain't seen nothing yet. This is a game where sniper rifles and binoculars aren't just cute items in your inventory, they will enable you to see very far into the distance.

INSPECTING GADGETS

So what cool toys will this special agent be playing with?

Sadly, there are no plans to include a Q character to give you such items as explosive toothpaste, laser firing pens and fully geared up Astin Martins. *Project IGI* attempts to be a more realistic (to a certain point at least)

interpretation of the spy world, and gadgets are thin on the ground. The main gizmo in your pack, designed to make you shiver with technological glee, is a satellite radar link, which you can use to call up maps and provide you with a Big Camera in the Sky to show you where guards and certain objects are placed. "If you want to know what's behind a wall, so you can plan how to get inside, you can bring the satellite map up and zoom right in", explains Andrew. "Although, just like in the real world there will be things that disturb the communication between you and the satellite link at certain moments and you'll have to find other avenues." Apart from the cable car jumping, you'll get the chance to perform a few more stunts, like sliding down a length of wire.



The satellite link in action.

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN SILENCER

Another aspect *IGI* intends to impress in is the AI. Enemies will react to both sight and sound, and fighting them should provide as much of a challenge as the black ops did in *Half-Life*. They will cover, retreat, duck and all the other things we've grown used to in Valve's modern classic. "Fire an unsilenced weapon and guards will come in swarms. Shoot a guard in plain view of another guard and the (live) guard will either open fire, sound the alarm, or both," says Andrew. Conversely, if you use a silencer and ensure there are no surveillance cameras around to see the deed, you could move around unseen and unheard. Not making a sound and hiding dead bodies is all a lot of fun in *Thief II*, but imagine how much more interesting it becomes when you're introduced into a modern setting, in broad daylight, with soldiers carrying Uzis instead of swords. "Each level is a big puzzle," comments Andrew on the way Interloop conceived the missions. "The player will have to find answers to questions such as 'how am I going to get past that guard?' and 'how the

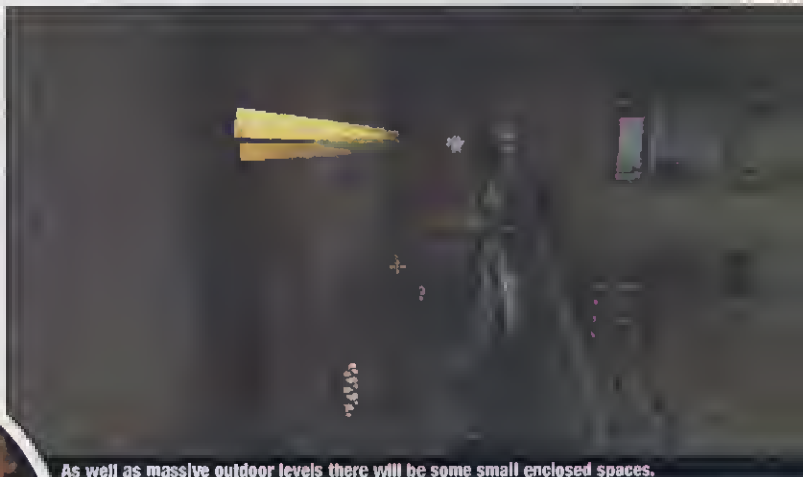
hell do I get into the compound unseen?" Naturally, once you've done what you went in to do (steal some important documents, disable a nuclear warhead, or whatever dirty tactics your government has employed you to perform), alarms will go off and you'll have to fight for your life. "The build-up of tension and its sudden release is a major factor in *IGI*."

There will be no other characters inside the missions to interact with as such, but you should never lose the sense of working for a higher power, because Anya, the person who informs you on the missions, keeps in touch constantly, sending warnings and updates of both the overall political situation and the changing details of each level. We've also been promised a mission in which you have to escort another character through a level, so expect plenty of variety to keep you on your toes all the time.

With so many titles always being announced it's quite difficult to pick out the real gems of the future, but (and you can trust us on this one, we've seen it running) *Project IGI* is definitely one of to watch out for. **EW**



Joe's attempt to retrieve his laundry goes horribly wrong.



As well as massive outdoor levels there will be some small enclosed spaces.

ROYALE WITH CHEESE

James Bond spin-offs are nothing new. Take a look at these gems

Traditionally, secret agent films have been spoofs more keen on piling on the laughs than hotting up the action. *Project IGI* doesn't have much to compete with. *Casino Royale*, the most direct spoof, was a load of rubbish, despite an all-star cast that included Peter Sellers, David Niven, Orson Welles and Woody Allen. James Coburn hammed up the tough man approach in the incredibly camp *Our Man Flint* and everyone knows about *Austin Powers* (just don't bother with the sequel). Of course, they're all better than the awful Richard Grieco vehicle *Teen Agent* (aka *If Looks Could Kill*).



"It's not mine. Honestly, it's not mine!"



Text adventures were his favourite games.



My name is Man. Dead Man.

CAMERA, ACTION

Press the button, you fool

If you're wondering why many of the screenshots seem to show the main character from a third-person perspective, don't be confused, there is no third-person camera view. Action icons appear to perform certain acts, such as climbing fences, picking locks and hacking into computers. When this happens the camera pulls away to show you this third-person view, leaving very vulnerable to attacks you can do nothing about. This simulates the risk you'd be exposed to in real life if you spent all your concentration in carrying out a tricky task, like reprogramming a computer. "Actions take an amount of time to do in the real world," says Andrew. And so they will in the game. You've been warned.

Old ladder-lover is at it again.



Remember *Saboteur* on the Spectrum? Well, this time you have to fight your way out.

Breaking the rules...

DUNGEON SIEGE

Real 3D, with freedom of camera angles and a rather snappy engine. Gas Powered, we thank you.



Your merry men survey the lie of the land.

Forget everything you've seen before. **Dave Woods** is convinced that *Dungeon Siege* is going to be something special

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Gas Powered Games
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.dungeonsiege.com
OUT Early 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's from the same bunch who developed *TA*
- Continuous 3D world, with no loading screens
- Amazingly flexible 3D engine
- Up to ten characters in your party
- Co-operative and deathmatch multiplayer
- Full *Dungeon Siege* editor included
- We've seen it running

Torches are flickering light through the dank room you've just stepped into. You can hear, rather than see, rats crawling under your feet, and between you and daylight are six skeleton guards that want you dead. You're wounded pretty badly and you're not going to make it in a fight, so you decide to side-step the bones and make for the exit. It's touch and go, but just as the skeleton brings his sword back for the deadly stroke you hit the doorway and... Please wait. Loading. You're suddenly transported from the inner sanctum of your imagination and back to your bedroom, complete with overflowing ashtray and dirty underpants.

Eliminating this problem is central to the philosophy of Chris Taylor and his newly formed company, Gas Powered Games, and it looks like you're going to witness the very first no-load game when *Dungeon Siege* is released early next year. At first glance it looks like another *Diablo* clone, but just try scratching the surface. In Chris Taylor's words: "When we set out to do *Dungeon Siege*, we wanted to do the same thing that we did with *Total Annihilation* a couple of years back. We wanted to expand the genre, and something I like to do is break rules. I like to do things that no one else wants to do." And, if you could see what we've seen, the sort of things the new 3D engine is capable of, then you'll already have scrubbed *Diablo II* from your must-buy list. Believe us. *Dungeon Siege* looks that good.

RTRPGS?

Classed as a game that combines "the immersive elements of a role-playing game with the intensity of a real-time strategy", *Dungeon Siege* is set in a continuous 3D world that can transport you through the deepest dungeons and straight out into the outside world without a single loading screen. Likewise, the game can put you at the foot of the highest mountain or on top of the deepest chasm, without a single pause. Creatures can inhabit any area of the world and, unlike other games, they're not restricted by invisible boundaries. Piss something off and there's a very good chance that it's going to follow you everywhere you go. Likewise, spy something in the terrain below and you can fire off a few arrows from a position of relative safety.

You can command up to ten different characters in your party (this number isn't set in stone at this stage of the development), and you decide exactly how their skills are going to develop. So if you want an out-and-out fighter you concentrate on hacking anything that dares to step in your path. After a certain amount of time your sword skills will go up. This means that you don't have to worry about selecting certain classes at the start of the game. It's all about freedom – a concept that more and more developers seem to be picking up on.



Expect plenty of action. On a bridge.



Move from the outside to the dungeon without a pause or a loading screen.



Look carefully and you'll see another path half-way down the chasm. Everything you see, and everything you can't for that matter, is in-game terrain.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Talking about freedom, Gas Powered is also implementing other small changes that go against the norm. The interface is completely customisable, with floating palettes for your main characters. Don't like the stats bar down the left? Get rid of it or drag it down to the bottom. And there are other niggles that Chris Taylor has eliminated from his game. "One of the things that's always been a pet hate of mine is you buy something and then go and sell it back and you lose 50 cents on the dollar. That just drives me nuts. It's like, can't I try it on before I buy it?" So all the shops in the *Dungeon Siege* world are going to have money-back guarantees.

And then there are the visuals. Static screenshots don't do justice to one of the best 3D engines we've ever seen. According to Chris Taylor: "Everything in the game is true 3D. No tricks. No 2.5D. Everything's real."

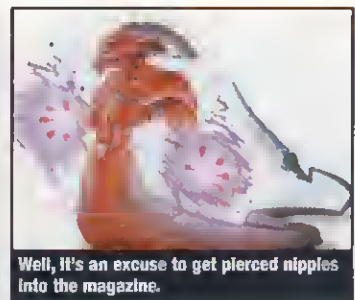
This means that all the characters are fully 3D animated and cast real shadows as you walk around. Likewise, all the spell effects are 3D, as was proved when Chris paused the action and flipped us inside and around a fireball in mid-flow. And because the game is in true 3D it leaves the developers open to some interesting tricks. For example, part of your party might fall through a trapdoor in the floor. Do you follow them down and risk dying in a locked cell? Or do you try to figure out a way to get around and down so that you can rescue them?

IT'S AWESOME, MAN

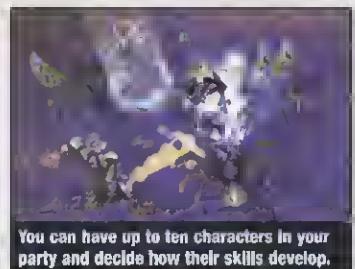
The secret lies in the fact that the engine only draws what you need to see on the screen. Camera angles mean that the engine never has to draw to an impossible horizon line, but you can pull out in the engine and see an amazing amount of detail. We were shown behind the scenes, when Chris pulled us out of the action and on top of the world. At the extreme borders we could see the world being created on the fly, and as Americans would say, it was totally awesome.

"Just to ensure that it has every chance of becoming the action RPG of 2001, you get the full Siege Editor in the box"

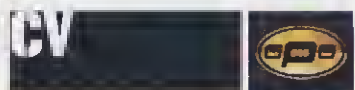
With a game time that's expected to top the 50-hour mark, and full co-operative and deathmatch-style multiplayer, *Dungeon Siege* isn't going to be a title that's spent over the course of a single weekend. But just to ensure that it has every chance of becoming the action RPG of 2001, Gas Powered is including the full Siege Editor in the box - the same editing tool that the development team is going to be using to create the full and finished game. This is a feature that producer Zachary Drake is very excited about. "*Total Annihilation* had a very similar system and people in the Internet community went crazy and did all sorts of stuff, and we're really opening it up even further than *TA*." This means that you can create your own characters, spells and entire worlds consisting of huge, seamless indoor and outdoor areas. You can then post these onto the Internet so that the real world can sample your fantasy creations. One day all games will be designed this way. [E]



Well, it's an excuse to get pierced nipples into the magazine.

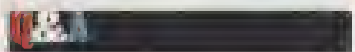


You can have up to ten characters in your party and decide how their skills develop.

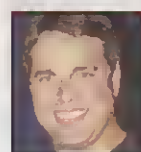


GAS POWERED GAMES

Dungeon Siege is the first game to come out of Gas Powered, but prior to forming the company, Chris and a number of others were at Cavedog and responsible for the sublime *Total Annihilation*.



CHRIS TAYLOR



Chris Taylor, president and designer at Gas Powered Games was introduced at Gamesstock as being both "profound and profane at the same time". Sounds like our kind of guy...

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

CHRIS First ever? Like in the beginning of time? That would be *Pong*!

PCZ And the best?

CHRIS Oh, that's a tough one, because there are so many! My favourites include, *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Populous*, *Syndicate*, *Civilization*, *C&C*, *WC2*, *Diablo*, and tons of others.

PCZ What was the last game that you bought?

CHRIS *The Sims*.

PCZ Still playing it?

CHRIS Not at the moment, but I really would like to spend more time playing when I can.

PCZ Apart from your own, which 3D engine do you most admire?

CHRIS Good question, if I had to say, it would have to be *Unreal Tournament*.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight?

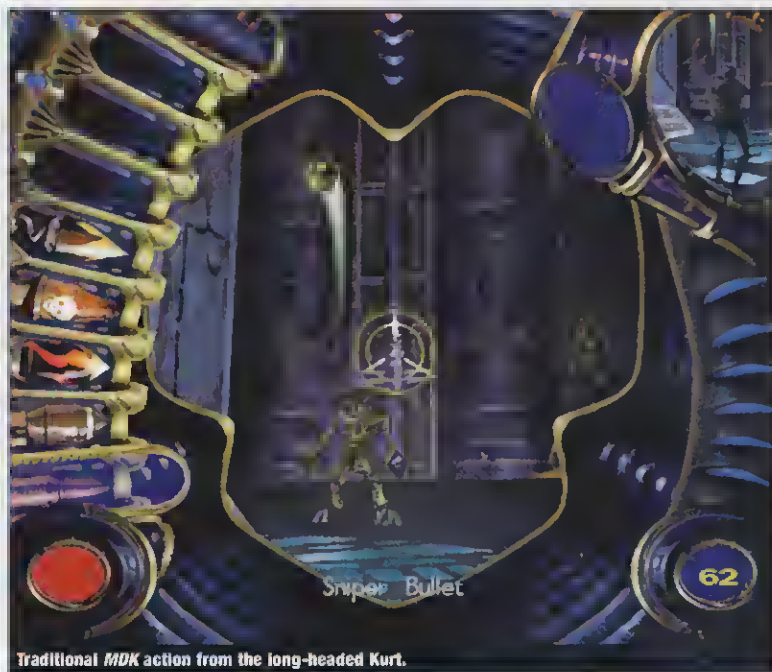
CHRIS A fist fight? Tons of them, I'm a real scrapper.

PCZ Who won?

CHRIS I always win!



This is Max, who lets out a comedy whelp when jumping.



Traditional MDK action from the long-headed Kurt.

The game whose name is still an enigma...

MDK2

It's big, it's hard and it's clever, but it's not Shiny. Steve Hill explains

In the chequered history of computer and video games, Shiny Entertainment's *MDK* is a strong contender for the title of most-hyped PC release of all time. However, many gamers didn't believe the hype, and the game sold a mildly disappointing 500,000 copies, despite garnering some 55 magazine covers worldwide. Initially rumoured to stand for 'Murder Death Kill', the game's ambiguous title made for much hilarity in the gaming press, with an array of alternatives suggested, including such gems as 'More Dead Kennedys' and 'My Dick's Knobbly'. Even the game's publishers got in on the act, with one advert carrying the legend 'Make Diana King', an unlikely proposition at the time, and clearly an impossibility now.

As for the game itself, *MDK* was an odd affair, although in retrospect it introduced some revolutionary elements that are now commonplace –

the ubiquitous sniping mode, for instance. With nothing like the wave of publicity that preceded the original, *MDK2* is almost upon us and the big news is that Shiny is not developing it. That honour has been bestowed upon Canadian outfit BioWare, whose joint CEO, Greg Zeschuk, says: "A lot of people ask us, 'Why is BioWare doing *MDK2* instead of Shiny?' The main reason I can

“Based around something of a cliff-hanger structure, practically every level ends with one character being rescued while another gets captured”

think of is that we were available to do it and capable of doing a good job. Interplay owns a significant share in Shiny and they both wanted *MDK2* to be made. At the time, Shiny didn't have any development slots open and they weren't averse to us doing it. And so the deal was done. We've been in contact with Shiny during

the development process, but haven't really done too much extensive consultation – we've both been so busy working on our respective games that we haven't had too much of a chance to demo what we're doing.”

ALIEN INVASION NA-NA-NA-NA-NA

The original story was an unlikely affair involving alien invaders arriving on Earth, who then had to

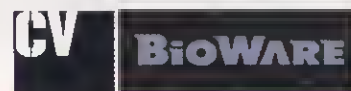
THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER BioWare
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.bioware.com
OUT May

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's the sequel to a much-hyped original
- ★ The development baton has been passed from Shiny to BioWare
- ★ You can now take control of three different characters
- ★ It's single-player only

Earth. However, in a hilarious twist, this time they land in Edmonton, Alberta (home of BioWare), as opposed to Laguna Beach, California (home of Shiny). As in the original, Kurt is sent down from space to stop a



BIOWARE
 Formed in 1995 to develop medical software and computer games, the company's focus has since shifted towards games and it also does the odd bit of animation for television and film.

1996 *Shattered Steel*. Some kind of future warfare type thing.

1996 *Baldur's Gate*. A big hit among goblin-fanciers everywhere.

1996 *Baldur's Gate: Tales Of The Sword Coast*. More of the same for the orc-lovers.

The trademark ribbon chule in action. As if.



Doctor Fluke Hawkins, MDK2's resident nutty professor.

mine-crawler from destroying Earth, and rapidly becomes embroiled in all manner of improbable situations.

It soon becomes apparent that the direct intervention of both Max and the Doctor is required to stop the alien invasion, and herein lies the most significant advance from MDK, in that all three characters are player-controlled. However, there's no RPG-style nonsense involved, as the choice of character is simply dictated by the story and the predicament of the other characters. For example, if one of them has been captured by the aliens, and another is stuck in a hyperspace bubble (don't you just hate it when that happens?), it is down to the remaining one to save the day. Based around something of a cliff-hanger structure, practically every level ends with one character being rescued while another gets captured. The game will boast three levels for each, as well as an end level in which the player does actually choose which character to use in finishing the game.

HELMET

Each of the characters are fairly different, something that should go without saying considering that one is a man with an elongated helmet, one is a mad professor and the other is a six-legged robotic dog. In addition to their disparate physical appearances, each has a different approach to the game. Kurt is old-skool MDK, a stealthy assassin who is most effective when sneaking around using his sniper scope, although he is still fairly handy with a chain gun. As in the original game, Kurt retains the implausible ribbon parachute, enabling him to silently glide around like a great big ponce. Conversely, Max is the consummate action hero, capable of holding weapons in each of his four robot-dog arms. And for extra manoeuvrability, he can strap a jet-pack to his canine back. Finally, Doctor Fluke Hawkins brings a puzzle element to the proceedings. Extremely weak when fighting



Traditional MDK action from the long-headed Kurt.

enemies directly, he is best used to set traps, and often relies on trickery to defeat his foes.

Another factor that identified the original MDK was its obscure humour, which manifested itself in surreal details such as The World's Most Interesting Bomb. As seen in the Earthworm Jim games, the folk at Shiny are renowned for their surreal sense of humour,

and it remains to be seen whether BioWare can pull it off to the same extent. From what we've seen it appears to be going for a more zany approach, which some more bitter readers may find offensive. As for the game itself, we've had a bit of a dabble and it seems to be shaping up in a competent fashion, with BioWare's so-called Omen engine ably supplying the requisite effects.

Unlike us, you haven't played the game, and will have to wait until the end of May to do so. What's the bet it comes out before Messiah? **PCZ**

GREG ZESCHUK

The Joint CEO of BioWare and co-executive producer on MDK2, he's been involved with the game since the outset

PCZ What is the first game you ever played?

GZ The first game I recall playing was a home version of Pong. It was produced by Coleco and featured not only standard Pong, but also Handball (Pong against a wall), and Doubles Tennis (two paddles on either end)! The complicating factor was that this unit resided at a cousin's house, located more than 300 miles from my home. My parents were confused about my persistent pleas to visit my cousin, but they eventually figured it out when they noticed all my cousin and I would do was play the game and ignore the rest of our family whenever we went for a visit.

PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?

GZ Hmmm — it's got to be the Apple and PC RPG Wasteland. It's my absolute all-time favourite. Great story, amazing balance, and, most importantly, it featured non-linear gameplay with multiple solutions to every challenge. It was ultra-swank!

PCZ What's the last game you handed over good money for?

GZ That's a tricky one. Now that I'm in the 'business', I can trade a game for almost anything. However, sometimes I just can't wait for certain games, so I rush out and buy them as soon as they are released.

The last PC game I bought was Homeworld — I could have traded for it (Relic is a fellow Canadian company located not too far from us), but I just had to check it out as quickly as possible. I certainly wasn't disappointed.

PCZ Have you ever had a fight? What happened?

GZ My partner Ray and I fight a lot. Usually it starts with body blows and then progresses to Terminator-like combat where one of us smashes through the third storey window of our office and we take it to the street outside. At least, that's how I remember it.

PCZ What do you think MDK stands for?

GZ I think MDK stands for Multiple Deadly Kicks! MDK was actually a fighting game — for some reason no one seemed to notice, but I'm quite sure that's the correct answer.

Back with a vengeance, it's...

X-COM ALLIANCE

It might not be another turned-based extravaganza, but as *Mark Hill* discovers, there's a lot to get excited about

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER MicroProse
PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive
WEBSITE www.microprose.com
OUT 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's an X-COM thinker shooter
- ★ It's a mix of *Half-Life*, *SWAT 3* and *Aliens Vs Predator*
- ★ Research and tactics are just as important as the action
- ★ Based on the *Unreal* engine

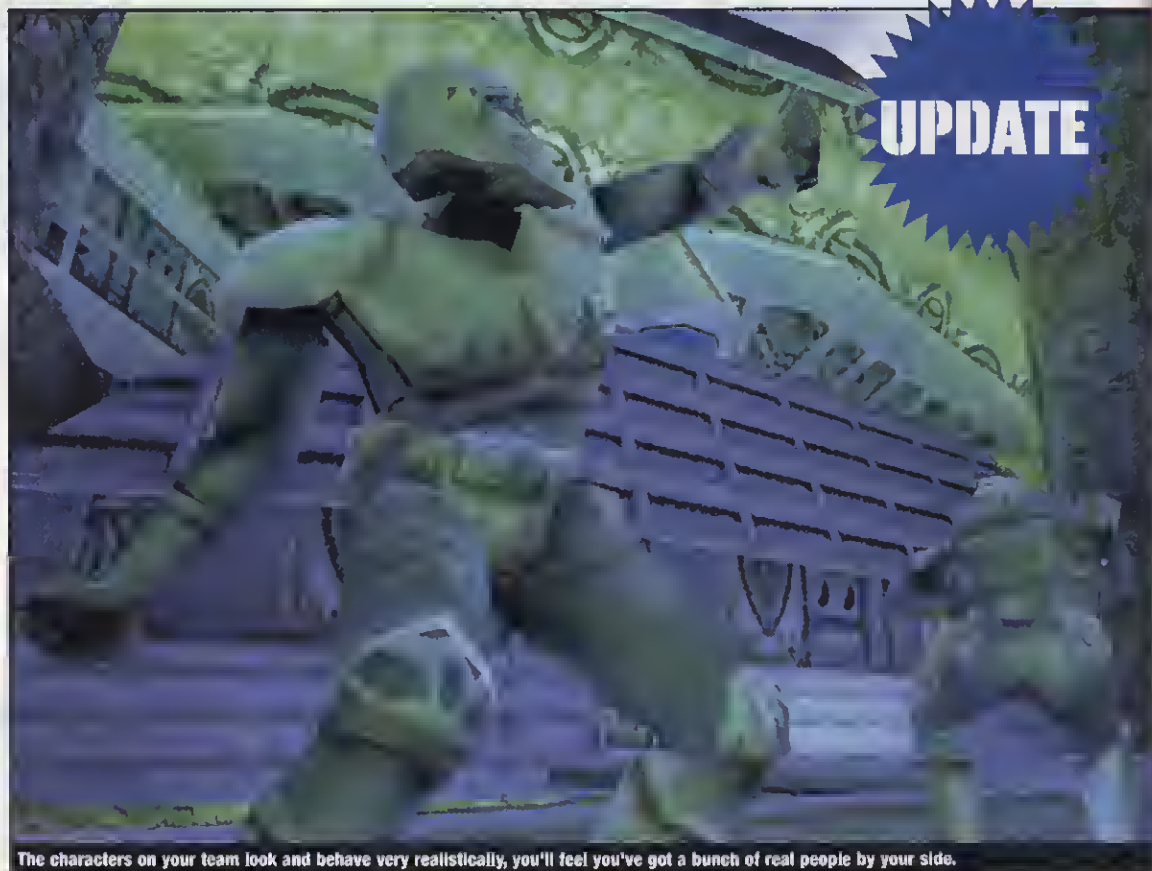
It's been so long since *X-COM Alliance* was announced, you've probably long since given up hope of it ever seeing the light of day. The last time we saw *Alliance* it was being developed in the UK and it was also looking seriously good. Now in the latter development stages in the US, the game is not only looking better, it's also shaping up to be considerably more advanced and ambitious than it ever was. A tactical squad-based first-person shooter could have got away with a lot a year ago, but a few small milestones like *Rainbow Six*, *Hidden & Dangerous* and *SWAT 3* (not to mention *Half-Life*, the standard by which all FPSs are now judged) have come along since then, and MicroProse know it has to pull off something pretty special to beat those games. And you know what, it looks as if it might do just that.



MICROPROSE

The *X-COM* series has generated a massive following. They are, for the most part, classy games that are venerated for their charm and have enduring qualities, which you will enjoy even now.

- 1984 UFO: Enemy Unknown
- 1985 X-COM: Terror From The Deep
- 1997 X-COM: Apocalypse
- 1998 X-COM: Interceptor
- 1999 Email X-COM



The characters on your team look and behave very realistically, you'll feel you've got a bunch of real people by your side.

X-COM OUT AND PLAY

If, like us, you've been a fan of *X-COM* since the classic *UFO: Enemy Unknown*, you'll know all about the addictive and immersive features of the series, as well as the enduring quality of each title (except the rather feeble *Interceptor*). You'll also understand why the prospect of a truly intelligent shooter with this kind of depth and history behind it is enough to make us weak at the knees with excitement. Purists who fear the game will lose the true essence of the brand to become another generic alien-blasting exercise can rest at ease. *Alliance* is best described as a cross between the scary atmosphere of *Aliens Vs Predator*, the team-based tactics of *SWAT 3* and the scripted elements and sheer quality of *Half-Life*. Add to this the RPG characteristics each member of your squad has and the importance of the research side of the

game, and you've got a serious contender for 'game of the year'. The game still uses the *Unreal* engine, albeit a heavily modified version of it, so the gorgeousness of the visuals is already guaranteed.

In case you don't know the story, the game takes place in 2063, after the Second Alien War but well before the setting of *Apocalypse*. You are the

DEEP TERROR

As with all the titles in the series, research plays a massive role in both the strategic choices you make and the actual combat. Apart from the weapons your ship is carrying (rifle, pistol, laser rifle, demolition charges...), you'll be able to collect alien weaponry, including new technology, such as fusion pistols

“This time the characters aren't small matchstick men, they're highly detailed people, each with their own voice, skills and personalities”

squad commander of the research vessel UGS Patton heading towards Mars, but in a *Voyager*-like twist, you end up on the other side of the Universe, caught up in another alien war. Because of this there is no base management in the game, although managing your supplies becomes all the more important.

and ammo. In typical *X-COM* fashion, you need to research them before you can use them, leaving men behind on the Patton to do the lab work while you're away on a mission. In addition, if you take a team member with high research skills into combat and discover a weapon, you'll be able to leave him or her behind to figure out



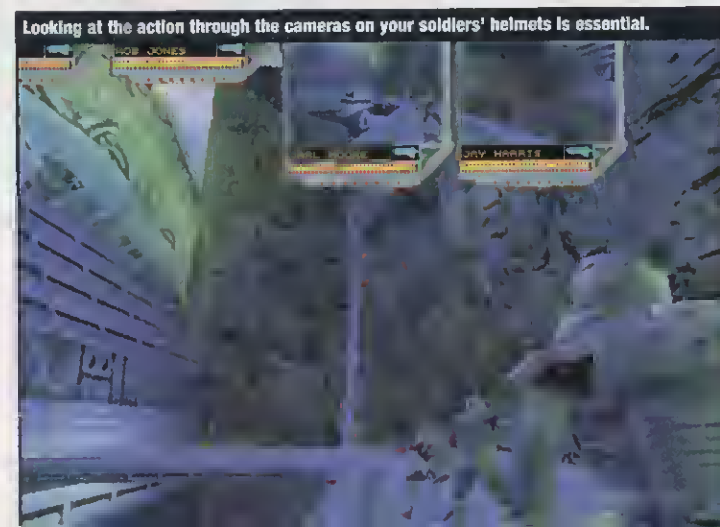
MicroProse is going for a real fear factor in terms of atmosphere.



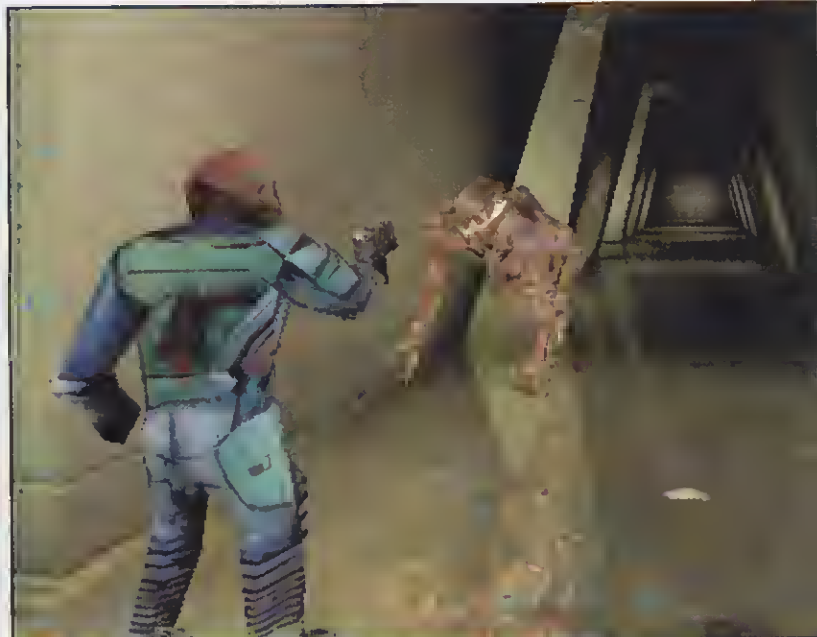
This is what the game looked like before the Yanks got their hands on it.



The Unreal engine is still in place, but it's souped up to the max.



Looking at the action through the cameras on your soldiers' helmets is essential.



You'll notice some dramatic differences in the graphics in the new version.

what the weapon is so that your team members can use it.

The game will work similarly to *SWAT 3*, in that you will only have direct control over the squad leader, issuing commands to your team members through a highly intuitive keyboard interface. The level of interaction with both your men and the environment is the highest we've seen yet, and you'll also be able to set up a thoughtful tactical attack by placing your soldiers where you want them and asking them to perform all sorts of complex actions. The AI promises to be at least as good as in *Half-Life*, and uses a technology that allows every friend and on-screen foe to perform complex actions at the same time.

DREAM TEAM

There are only 12 soldiers in all, four of whom you can take into the actual missions, making each and every one a precious resource, and enhancing the feeling of attachment *X-COM* games have always been so good at developing. If you lose one of them, you can't just go to the recruitment screen and hire a few more hands. One of the main reasons combat in the series was always so exciting was because you got to know and care about the characters (which you can still rename, by the way), eliciting cries of despair whenever one of them got killed. This time, though, the characters aren't small matchstick men moving from one square to another; they're highly detailed people, each with their own voice (with more than 200 lines of speech), skills (which will improve with every mission and determine who you take with you) and personalities.

Game designer, Christopher Clark, delighted in showing us all the

different motion-captured animations (over 300 for each trooper) for deaths, falls, gestures and everything else likely to happen. Depending on their personality and what happens around them, soldiers will panic, act cautiously or with bravado. You will also be able to see the effects of psi-attacks on them, while your own vision will distort when you're attacked. And, yes, you can use mind control to add aliens to your team for a short while. What's more, because you can see the action through the cameras your team has fitted into their helmets, you can even see yourself being killed by possessed soldiers. And if all this isn't enough to get you excited, you're probably already dead. **PCZ**



CHRIS CLARK

X-COM Alliance's game designer cut his teeth on table-top RPGs and is a firm believer in little green men

PCZ What is the first game you ever played?

CHRIS The game that got me started in game design was basic *Dungeons & Dragons*. I found loopholes in the rules and started writing my own updates.

PCZ What is your all-time favourite game?

CHRIS I think my favourite games are still pen-and-paper RPGs. They allow me to create worlds that are my own.

PCZ And the last game you paid for?

CHRIS *Quake III* and *System Shock 2*. If I want a game I go out and buy it.

PCZ Do you believe in aliens?

CHRIS Yes, I do. I mean there are billions of planets in our galaxy, the thought that we are alone in the universe is a ridiculous assumption.

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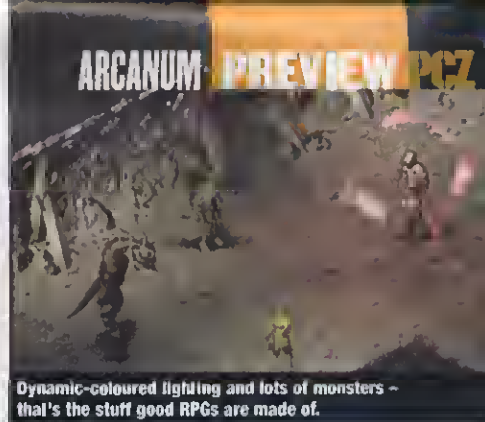
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Graphically things will look similar to *Fallout* and *Fallout 2*.



There should be a variety of interesting locations to explore.



Dynamic-coloured lighting and lots of monsters – that's the stuff good RPGs are made of.



An auto-equip option should maximise interface efficiency.

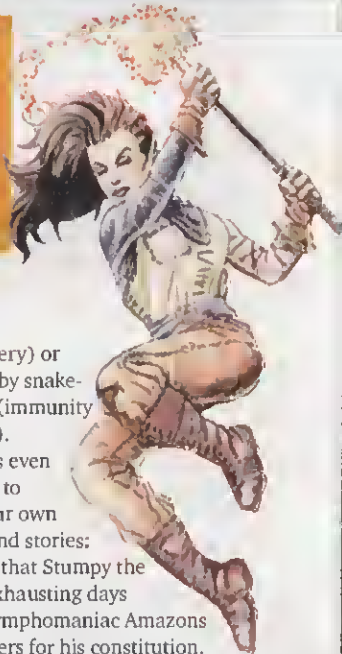


You can search an airplane wreck for new technology if you happen to be that way inclined.



Midnight at the oasis...

ARCANUM



Keith Pullin sifts through the fallout to discover there's life in the old RPG yet...

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Troika Games
PUBLISHER Virgin/Interplay
WEBSITE www.troikagames.com
OUT End of 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- From the same people who brought you *Fallout* and *Fallout 2*
- Excellent character creation facilities
- Real-time and turn-based combat
- Interesting fantasy/pseudo-cyberpunk setting

After *Fallout* and *Fallout 2*, ambitious designers Tim Cain, Leonard Boyarsky and Jason Anderson quit Interplay to start up Troika Games. Its first offering, *Arcanum*, is due out towards the end of this year, and yes – it's an isometric RPG – and yes – it does look very similar to the *Fallouts*, but since when did aesthetics tell the full story?

Troika has veered off rather wildly from its usual post-apocalyptic synopsis and delved instead into the realms of pure fantasy, replete with gnomes, elves, ogres and halflings. There are magic items galore, subplots, and a multitude of skills such as gambling, healing and lock picking. Oh, it's all very *AD&D* indeed, except for one thing: among the spells and magic lurk industrial weapons and

FIRST ENCOUNTER

machines. What we have in *Arcanum: Of Steamworks And Magick Obscura* (the game's catchy full title) is Jules Verne meets JRR Tolkien in a stylish potpourri of fantasy, technology, magic and machinery. In other words it's cyberpunk for the 1800s.

DIVIDED WE STAND

The crux of the game is deciding where your character stands on the whole magic versus technology debate. Regardless of which race you choose to be (human, dwarf, halfling, elf, half-elf, gnome or half-ogre), *Arcanum* will monitor your decisions with a balance meter. Success in either spell casting or technology is determined by how committed you are to a particular path.

The game's interface is extremely deep, providing huge incentives and rewards regardless of which route you decide to go down. Learning

magic means you'll have to deal with 16 colleges, with five spells in each. Technological teachings are split into eight schools, with seven degrees parsec. The more degrees you learn, the easier it becomes to understand the complex schematic diagrams which allow you to create highly destructive inventions like mini-guns and giant mechanical spiders.

“What we have in *Arcanum* is Jules Verne meets JRR Tolkien in a stylish potpourri of fantasy, technology, magic and machinery”

While experience is gained in the usual ways (killing monsters, casting spells, etc), you don't just go up a level. In *Arcanum* you can choose which statistic or skill you wish to increase. Mental attributes include intelligence, willpower, perception and charisma, while strength, constitution, dexterity and beauty make up the physical assets. Additional 'background' attributes are also available. For example, you can be raised by lions (thus increasing

your bravery) or nurtured by snake-handlers (immunity to poison).

There's even an option to create your own background stories: we found that Stumpy the dwarf's exhausting days among nymphomaniac Amazons did wonders for his constitution. But when it comes to brains – well, the poor guy's an emotional wreck.

Another benefit of having such diverse and interesting character attributes is the variation it brings to the multiplayer game. Up to eight people will be able to play specially designed ongoing quests, which can be played over the Internet or LAN.

Ultimately, *Arcanum* should be one of the most open-ended RPGs ever devised. Multiple endings are already guaranteed due to the fact that either magic or technology can be the victor. Here in the office tiny-bearded folk are already polishing their funny-shaped dice in anticipation. Meanwhile, those who don't usually give a monkey's arse about that sort of thing have raised an eyebrow. Could it be that the RPG is about to find a new audience? Let's hope so – it's about time. [E]



Insane will provide 25 environments to race over, including mountains and deserts.

INSANE

Going totally round the bend: *Martin Korda*

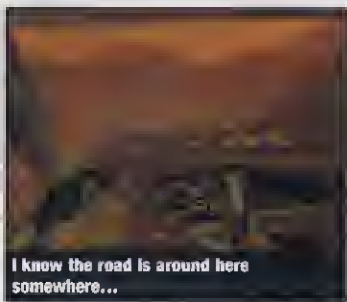
THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Inivictus
PUBLISHER Codemasters
WEBSITE www.codemasters.com
OUT Summer

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✦ Internet-based racing fun
- ✦ Total in-race freedom
- ✦ Track Editor
- ✦ More than 20 vehicles available to race

FIRST ENCOUNTER



I know the road is around here somewhere...



Decisions, decisions... which monster truck will I drive today?



A rolling demonstration of how not to drive.



Have you herd the one about buffalo stampedes?

There comes a time with every racing game where you become so good at it that the game gets boring. You sit back in your seat, nonchalantly slide around the corners and go in for pit stops at the end of every circuit, yet still effortlessly manage to lap the entire field. It's times like these when you yearn for a new challenge, but at 2am on a Wednesday morning, phoning your best mate and suggesting they come round for a game can have serious repercussions on your friendship. *Insane* however, from Codemasters (*Colin McRae Rally* and *TOCA 2*), could well be the answer to the single-player blues that so many racing game enthusiasts experience.

Set for release in the summer, *Insane* will pit numerous off-road

taken to bring down your lap times, but where less desirable terrain will make driving that much harder. Every car will have its own handling, with independent suspension and a variable centre of gravity. Damage will be real-time, and the vehicle's performance and appearance will deteriorate accordingly.

Insane will provide a massive 25 environments to race over, including mountains and deserts in locations throughout the world. Races can take place during the night as well as the day, and varying weather conditions will also influence the races.

One of the nicest features seems to be the unusual modes of play that are set to be on offer to you. As well as the inevitable race and destruction derby options, there will be several others, such as flag hunting and football mode. The first of these will be reminiscent of the Capture The Flag games found in many FPSs, such

“If you get bored with the circuits on offer, *Insane* is set to come with an Environment Generator, so that you can create your very own wacky tracks”

vehicles against each other, over a multitude of circuits. There will be 20 machines for you to choose from, ranging from four- and eight-wheeled monster trucks to military vehicles, with four handling styles, front, rear, 4WD and AWD. Unlike most games, *Insane* is aimed at the online gaming market just as much as the single-player one. Codemasters will be offering its very own multiplayer network for gamers to play over. This will allow an almost unlimited variety of opponents to race against, and with its easily accessible online play options, *Insane* should have no problems in establishing a large Internet-based gaming community.

If you haven't already guessed by the hardware described here, or by the screen shots, there's not going to be too many rules in *Insane*. Instead, there will be near total freedom in each race, where short cuts can be

as *Unreal Tournament*, and will probably bear more than a passing resemblance to the Cops and Robbers gameplay of *Midtown Madness*. The second of the two will see teams of cars battling it out on a football field, where the ball must be driven into the net in order to score. If you get bored with the circuits on offer, *Insane* is set to come with an Environment Generator, so that you can create your very own wacky tracks. With the possibility of buffalo stampedes during races as well, it certainly sounds as if *Insane* could be a great laugh in both single and multiplayer modes.

Considering racing games are one of the simplest types of games to play online, it's surprising more developers haven't taken this route. But *Insane* may just be the game that changes this trend, banishing the boredom of single-player racing forever. **PCZ**



You've pushed yourself to the edge.

Now drive over it.



Get ready for the hottest
drives in history. Take the road
in prototype supercars Flirt
with disaster on road and track.
And whether you enter Action
Mode for an adrenaline fix
or seek a career of it as
an elite Porsche Test Pilot,
you'd better be prepared. After
all, preparation is everything

? Wrong



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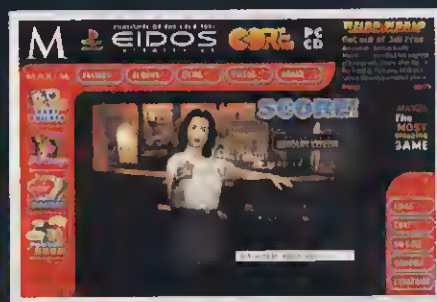
NEED FOR SPEED
SHIFT TO RACE



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FIRST
ENCOUNTERWARLORDS
BATTLECRY

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER SSG
 PUBLISHER Red Orb Entertainment
 WEBSITE www.warlordsbattlecry.com
 OUT Spring 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Real-time *Warlords*
- RPG elements
- Detailed 3D graphics

Warlords has been with us for years – since 1989 in fact, when the original was released. Improved versions have been rolling along regularly, although it was the 1998 release, *Warlords III: Darklords Rising*, that really earned it its reputation as one of the finest turn-based strategy combat games on offer. With a turn-based *Warlords IV* due out in 2001, developer SSG is currently putting the finishing touches to something similar, yet completely different – a real-time version called *Warlords Battlecry*.

Set in a fairly traditional fantasy universe, populated with dwarves, ogres, giants and goblins, *Battlecry* blends real-time combat in *Age Of Empires* fashion with a strong role-playing theme.

This RPG element is provided by the heroes, individual characters that fight as combat units, but which can grow in experience and skill as the game goes on. They can be one of eight different

Red Orb's turn-based classic really will go real-time as **Andrew Wright** discovers

races (human, high elf, wood elf, dark elf, dwarf, minotaur, orc and barbarian) and one of four main character classes (warriors, wizards, thieves or priests, with 16 sub-classes). Heroes can cast spells and use magic weapons to enhance their combat power. Player character heroes also have a command radius, which gives friendly units certain bonuses.

The real-time version of *Warlords* has a specially-developed graphics engine, which provides highly-detailed 3D effects, such as particle effects and real-time lighting to allow for day and night cycles and accurate dynamic weather modelling. This opens up all kinds of strategic possibilities – positioning your forces during the day and attacking under the cover of darkness for example.

Each *Battlecry* campaign is divided into six chapters, in which you can follow the path of good or evil. However, your heroes – in effect player characters – retain their characteristics and experience from one scenario to the next, and can even retain their associated armies. You can also import

a player hero from a single-player game into a multiplayer game and pit him or her against up to five opponents across the Internet or LAN.

Other features of the real-time version include an improved magic system with eight different spheres and more than 90 spells, each with its own unique animation. You'll be able to give armies one of ten standard formation orders for more realistic combat. Now

Combat is beautifully animated and some strong units can actually pick up objects from the landscape, such as sheep and cows, and throw them at their enemies. Apparently a sheep does more widespread damage than a rock, but hey, this is a fantasy world...

The game features non-cheating AI, which provides a robust opponent in single-player mode. Minimum requirements look set to be a 233MHz

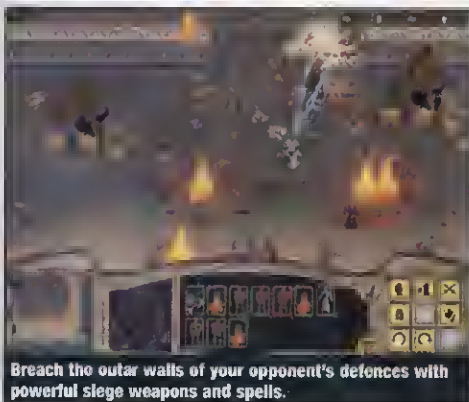
“Some units can pick up objects from the landscape, such as sheep and cows, and throw them at their enemies”

processor, 64Mb of RAM and *DirectX*-compatible video and sound cards. Up to six players will be able to play over an IPX network or across the Net.

Warlords Battlecry brings hero-based strategy into the world of real-time games. If first looks are anything to go by, it has changed enough to make the game challenging, but has kept enough of the *Warlords* essence to make it instantly recognisable. If you're an *Age Of Empires* or *Warcraft* fan, or one of the many *Warlords* devotees, keep a good look out for this one. [E]

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Breach the outer walls of your opponent's defences with powerful siege weapons and spells.



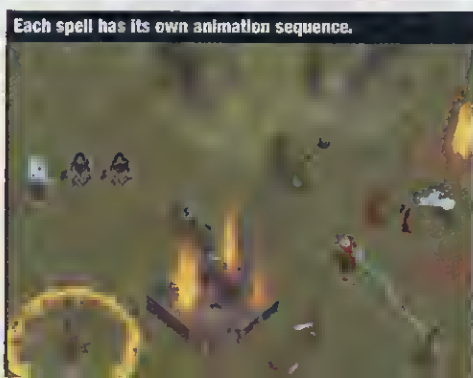
Player heroes can affect troops around them, lifting morale and skill.



Battlecry features an improved magic system with eight different spheres and more than 90 spells.



Mass your armies and order them into one of ten formations.



Each spell has its own animation sequence.



Castles become central to *Battlecry* strategies.



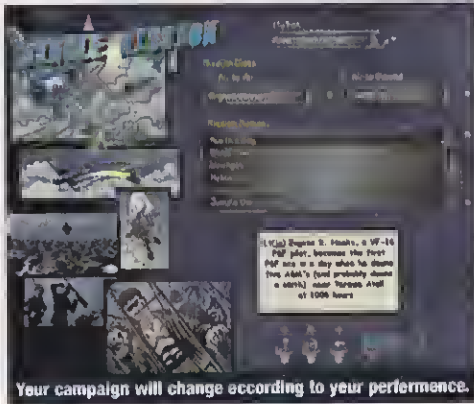
We've seen these babies flying and they're looking very tasty indeed.



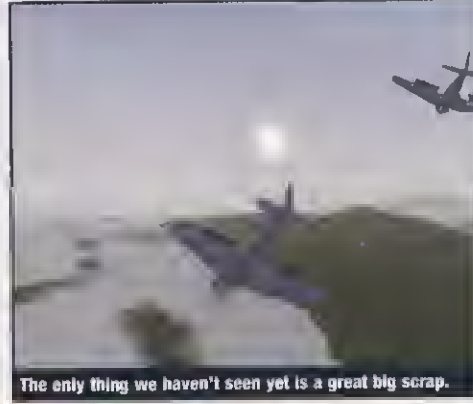
The view from inside the Wild Cat. Get inside a Japanese plane and all the instrumentation and redie calls will be in Japanese.



Full-on weather effects and everything. Coo.



Your campaign will change according to your performance.



The only thing we haven't seen yet is a great big scrap.

COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2: WWII PACIFIC THEATER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Microsoft
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/games
OUT Late 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ *Flight Sim 2000* engine with enhanced effects
- ★ Dynamic campaign set in the Pacific Theatre
- ★ Enhanced AI and real-life consequences
- ★ Mission editor
- ★ Multiplayer across the Internet

When it comes to flight sims you've got two main camps to contend with. The first are happy to sit in a cockpit on a scheduled flight from Manchester to London, dreaming of the days when they used to have a woman in every port. Yeah right. Then there are the ones who prefer their planes to spit out bullets; the ones who seek out sport by travelling back in time to the glory days of World War II. With *Combat Flight Sim 2*, Microsoft is determined to gain the number one spot back from Jane's. And after witnessing the first demonstration of the game at the recent Gamestock event in the US we don't envisage much opposition.

Realism is the key. For a start you've got the new enhanced *Flight*

Ack, ack, ack, ack, ack. Our venerable hack, *Dave Woods*, leads you through one of the best-looking World War II fighters so far



Sim 2000 engine, using digital elevation model (DEM) data from the US Geological Survey. There are also improved 3D objects and effects such as explosions and splashes, plus new weather effects, including cloud, haze and rain. Each plane (including the Corsair, Zero, Hell Cat and Wild Cat) is going to be four times more detailed than those in the previous version and there's also visual damage, so get close enough and you can see the pock marks left by your bullets and the broken wings on the craft you've just taken out. If you look at some of the screenshots closely you'll see that this claim about detail isn't an exaggerated one, and don't forget that we've seen the planes flying around in an early build, so we know that these aren't faked-up stills.

Having the aircraft and the level of graphical detail is one thing, but you can have the snazziest engine in the world and still feel like you're playing a simple computer game. Daryl Saunders, product manager for simulation titles, points out that the developer's investment in the game goes further than simple design. "Realism goes beyond the aircraft. What we want you to do is feel what it was like to be a combat pilot in the

including torpedo bombings, ground attacks and, best of all, carrier landings, all wrapped in a world that's four times larger than the previous game. The outcome of your game is dependant on the way you perform - campaign is determined by mission outcome.

And, as well as focusing on gameplay issues, the developers have been attempting to inject a human side to the drama. The developers interviewed pilots and trawled

“So, in *Combat Flight Sim 2* the wingmen have enhanced AI, which means that you can give and take orders from them and get instant feedback on their status”

Pacific Theatre in World War II, and for the real pilot what it was all about was consequences.”

So, in *CF2*, your wingmen have enhanced AI, which means that you can give and take orders from wingmen and get instant feedback on their status. Lose a good wingman and you might be faced with him being replaced by a rookie, which is going to seriously hamper your campaign.

The game itself is spread over 120 missions built in a flexible structure,

through boxes and boxes of previously classified information, including real pilot reports on how the planes actually performed, as opposed to the manufacturer's specifications.

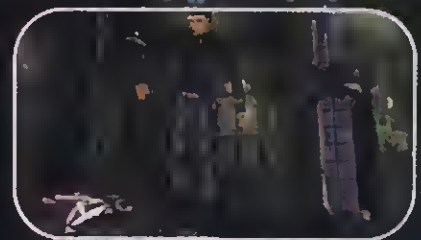
If that doesn't sound enough to be going on with, try adding up to eight-player multiplayer missions across the Internet, LAN or modem-to-modem, and a fully-featured mission editor, which allows you create your own dynamic campaigns set in the South Pacific. We can hardly wait. [E]

HELL WILL BE BORN IN THE HEAVENS

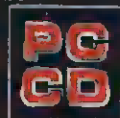
MARTIAN GOTHIC

UNIFICATION

THREE LIVES. ONE DISEASE. ONE FUTURE.



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PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first –

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money of the family. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so basically the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphics. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have plenty of room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot as well...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb

Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family of drives). It's large and fast with plenty of room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supply speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We use primarily Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humungous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) through to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last, but certainly not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17inch Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to the cheaper monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image displayed on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 105. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.



CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte 01604 232200 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315550 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01753 549442 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Intogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 148 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mindscape 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9300 • Zblax 01628 332233



REVIEWS

we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

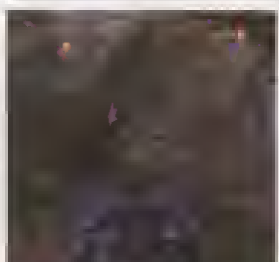
REVIEWS



66 SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR



72 FORCE COMMANDER



74 ULTIMA ASCENSION



78 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE



84 RALLY MASTERS

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

Z **90-100%** Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the *PC ZONE* 'Classic' award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.

PCZONE **80-89%** Games that score 80-89 get the *PC ZONE* 'Award For Excellence'. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.

70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an 'Award For Excellence', but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or you happen to see them at a reduced price.

PCZONE **0-19%** Games that score under 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

PCZONE HALL OF FAME

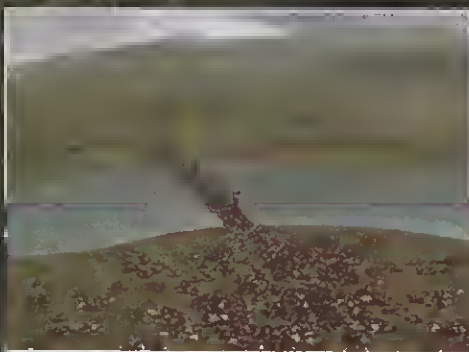
These are the games that currently score 90% or above and so are deemed to be *PC ZONE* classics





SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out May

Shogun is all about total war. Unlike *Richie Shoemaker*, who is just a total wa...**TECH SPECS****MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** No 3D card required, although a bog-standard first-generation card will help. 64Mb RAM would be very handy as well

Bring out your dead.



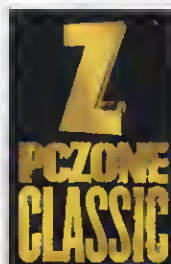
Attacking during the winter season will mean you have a shorter time to win the battle.



In no other strategy game does weather play such an important part.



It's a Risk-y business this Shogun.



The history of PC strategy gaming is littered with milestones, some towering monoliths, others simply

unobtrusive waypoints. Some games have refined existing ideas to perfection and buffed them to a shine. Others have broken the mould completely and delivered something totally new and refreshing. But, up until now, very few have managed to do the double: be both original and sophisticated. Usually, whether it's the 3D camera, or a lack of imagination, something gets messed up along the way. With real-time strategy games

Whether you have followed developments on the game from the beginning, dabbled with the demo that was on last month's cover disc, or just happen to be flicking through the mag and been dazzled by the pretty pictures, what you can't fail to have noticed is the sense of scale that *Shogun* succeeds in recreating on-screen. Unlike any other real-time strategy game, *Shogun* has managed to cram thousands of tiny soldiers on screen, all at the same time, and push them across beautiful rolling 3D terrain.

For me, not since the likes of *Lords Of Midnight* on the humble Spectrum has a strategy game made me feel like the general of a massed army, perched on top of a hill, waiting in the buffeting wind for the ranks of enemy troops to come marching through the mist in the valley below.

LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD

Whether you choose to engage in one of the preset historical battles, customise a single or

“The first aspect you have to come to grips with is that for each 3D battle, there is an attacker and a defender”

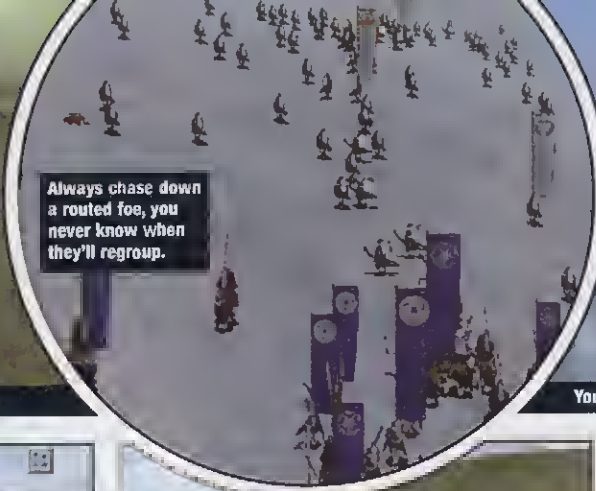
especially, innovative games have become something of a dying breed – innovative games that work well even more so. You could probably trace a line from *Command & Conquer* to *Age Of Empires II*, and for all the latter's finely-tuned balance of play and thousand-year history, there is not one major aspect of gameplay that hasn't been done before. Basically, it all comes down to vision, or more specifically a lack of it. *Shogun: Total War*, you will be pleased to know, lacks none.

For sure, if you've bought every strategy game known to man, you'll recognise a huge cut-and-paste job from games gone past; specifically great clods of *Warhammer: Dark Omen*, the board game set-up of *War Of The Worlds* and more recently *Theocracy*, but nowhere else has each element been dragged and dropped so simply and effectively, and with such dramatic results.

multiplayer battle of your own where you set up each of your armies, or run headfirst into the full single-player campaign game, the first aspect you have to come to grips with is that for each 3D battle, there is an attacker and a defender and each player must place their forces before the battle kicks off. As the attacker, you'll have the option to wait, depending on the weather forecast for the day ahead: snow will slow down your troops, heavy rain will piss them off and render hand-cannons useless, wind will blow your arrows off course and fog could cause all sorts of obvious problems. For the defender, choosing what weather to defend in is obviously not an option. However, being more familiar with the territory in dispute means you can place your armies pretty much wherever you like in order to take advantage of terrain and cover.



A foggy day is perfect for those surprise attacks.



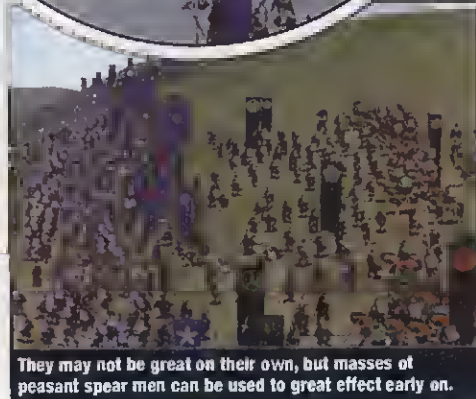
Always chase down a routed foe, you never know when they'll regroup.



You'll need to find a bigger forest to hide this lot.



It's the little things that count - like smoke rising from a volley of musket fire.



They may not be great on their own, but masses of peasant spear men can be used to great effect early on.



You can increase income in coastal regions by building a port to help trade.

As soon as the battle starts, from the point until the enemy force is spotted by your forward units until they engage in hand-to-hand combat, each moment is spent shuffling the units of warriors around in one epic round of paper, scissors, stone. Archers and musketeers need a clear field of view, preferably on high ground, out of the way of warrior monks and cavalry. Spearmen need to be in a position to hold cavalry at bay and slow-moving attacking units need to be able to engage the enemy without being felled in a hail of bullets and arrows.

Moving your units is a ridiculously simple affair, thanks to the fact that each unit is moved en masse as a troop of up to 120 men.

Using either the right mouse button or a few keyboard shortcuts, you can switch formations, depending on the unit type or whether they are set to attack or defend. To make full use of ranged units they must be strung along a

wide front, no more than two ranks deep, either close in, or loose, if you expect to come under missile attack. Samurai or monks, on the other hand, are more effective in a deeper formation, or in a wedge to drive a hole in the enemy front line. The way

your units face is also important: archers firing on a unit of spearmen can easily be routed if outflanked. It's a tricky job to keep all your units in the right place, especially in tight areas where troops can become bogged down by terrain or mixed up if

moving through each other, but the effort yields results, even if it means the wholesale slaughter of your troops, as the battles look simply stunning.

In terms of AI, *Shogun* is immediately distinct. For example, there you are, your forces centred in a valley with trees on either side draped across the slopes. You would expect, if you have at least an ounce of tactical savoir-faire, that the defenders would have someone hiding in the bushes, and sure enough (though not always), they'll appear to outflank your attack unless you are well prepared. Another example of good design is if you have numerical advantage and you've successfully made use of the terrain by outflanking your enemy on higher ground, they'll retreat and let you take the territory.

They may have killed dozens of your samurai by raining arrows on them, but get too close with the right troops and their leader will know that getting stuck in is the wrong thing to do. These leaders have read all the right books - specifically Sun Tzu's *The Art Of War*. Coded into their virtual brains are hundreds of the man's teachings and they'll know

that it's better to live to fight another day if they have a better chance of winning.

TURNING JAPANESE

But there's more to *Shogun* than point-and-click real-time strategy. Just as important if you want to get ahead in the campaign game, is the *Risk*-style, simultaneous turn-based sequence that frames each 3D battle.

IN PERSPECTIVE

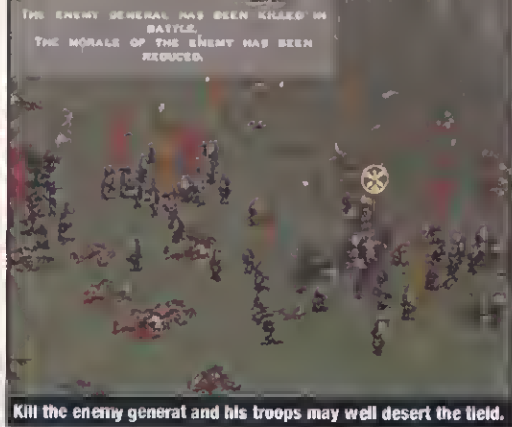
When it comes to mixing 3D real-time tactics with turn-based boardgame strategy, *Shogun* pretty much trounces all opposition. The closest to it would probably be *Theocracy* (reviewed last issue), but being 2D isometric, lacking the subtle interface and AI of *Shogun* and being set in South America, it doesn't really come close.

Braveheart is a bloated mess in comparison, *Napoleon* has too much of a niche appeal. *Warhammer* is frighteningly similar in its 3D battles, but is far too difficult and linear for its own good. And *Age II*? Well, as we said when we reviewed it, it's perhaps the last of the traditional real-timers. *Shogun* is the future.

Braveheart	████████████████████
Warhammer: Dark Omen	████████████████████
Theocracy	████████████████████
Shogun: Total War	████████████████████
Napoleon	████████████████████
Age Of Empires II	████████████████████

“These leaders have read all the right books - specifically Sun Tzu's *The Art Of War*. Coded into their virtual brains are hundreds of the man's teachings”





Kill the enemy general and his troops may well desert the field.



Once your warriors gain enough honour, you can build dojos to train your troops.



Attacking across bridges can be difficult, but only if the enemy has enough archers to pin you down.



A sudden downpour can render your musketeers useless.



The more developed your castle, the more building options become open to you.



Even when outnumbered, you can still win if you place your troops in the right place.

Set in 16th Century feudal Japan, the map which you must eventually seek to control is split into 60 regions. Your aim, as the warlord – or daimyo – of one of seven clans, is to become the Shogun by controlling each territory on the map. This isn't just a simple case of moving your armies from territory to territory either, with the game switching to a 3D tactical view whenever you come across the opposition. The strategic side is almost a game unto itself, reminiscent of the now hard-to-come-by *Shogun* board game. How you split up your armies, employ spies, diplomats and assassins is central to success. Then there is the simple resource management side of the game, where each region yields a yearly crop and depending on how hard you tax your subjects, brings in revenue for you to maintain and expand your armies.

Another important aspect that comes into play is how loyal each region is to their leader. The longer a region stays under your control, the higher the loyalty rating. Anything above 100 per cent and you're safe. Invest in the region or post an army there and the peasants love you even more. Let your loyalty rating slip however, perhaps by raising taxes too high, and you could have a rebellion on your hands that may spread into neighbouring territories.

Starting off in 1530, each year is split into four turns, or seasons, during

which you can move armies and other strategic units (ninjas, spies, etc), recruit troops or build the structures that allow you access to more experienced and better equipped armies. While each region provides a certain amount of koku (the unit of currency used at the time, one koku being the amount of rice needed to feed a man for a year), some 'special' regions allow you to build mines to bring in more money, or ports to bring in a trade income in coastal areas. Highland regions, as you would expect, are poor earners, but easier to defend. Inland plains are the most fertile and more difficult to keep hold of if you're attacked in great numbers. If a river runs through the region there are even more strategies to consider. Then there are castles to worry about...

DOJO RISING

Castles aren't just defensive fortifications, but act as a base from which you can expand the production of your units. Able to

garrison just four armies, the first type of castle you build is essentially just a basic stockade, but from that you are able to build your first level dojo, or training centre. A spear dojo allows you to create yari ashigaru (peasants with sharp sticks) and yari samurai (trained warriors with spears), both of these are cheap to produce. More effective, and for which you'll need to build an archery dojo, are light samurai; trained archers with limited ammunition that on high ground can effect a retreat of poorly defended troops before they even get near you.

Before too long though, you'll need to expand your castle so you can recruit cavalry, monks and, once Westerners arrive with their Christian ideas and guns, musketeers. If you've settled in one of the many special regions, you'll also be able to erect buildings that create improved weapons or superior armour, specific only to troops recruited in that region. For example, one region in particular, produces exceptional cavalry. Another, Toga, is the source of Japan's most fearsome warrior monks.

Such regions are obviously important to hold on to. As well as providing a base from which you can recruit massed units, castles are necessary for you to train specialists that, although not used in the 3D battles, can affect the outcome

them beforehand. One such unit is the ninja – the most experienced of which can easily eliminate an enemy general and leave his army confused for the next turn. Emissaries on the other

hand are required if you want to strike up an alliance with one of the other leaders. Shinobi are effective when it comes to spying on enemy territory, they're able to tell you enemy troop strengths

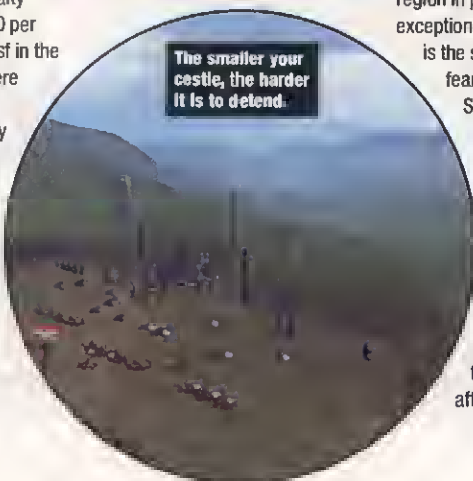


KING OF THE CASTLE

Although the 3D combat section of the game can be skipped in the campaign game, with the battles worked out purely on numbers, to miss them would be a heinous crime. As well as the open battles, with up to 16,000 troops running around the map, if a territory has a castle, you can lay siege to it.

To get to the castle however, you first have to defeat the defending army, who, if they know what's good for them, will retreat to the safety of its walls when overwhelmed. At this point, the territory becomes in dispute, with neither side able to earn any income from it. Then you can either lay siege to it, which depending on its size, will hold out for up to four seasons (one year), or you can attempt to capture it directly. More often than not, laying siege is a simple case of waiting until the occupants try to break out before disease and lack of food kill them off completely.

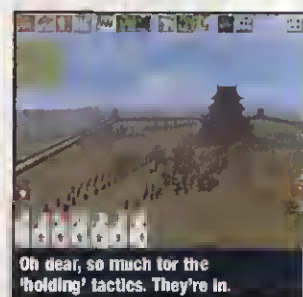
Although significantly different from the open-field battles, castle attacks are simply a case of attacking in numbers. The defenders have both the advantage of cover and height, able to rain down masses of arrows into the ranks of troops moving slowly uphill, and because there is no way to destroy walls, the only way into the castle is through the front gate. All the defender has to do is keep the entrance covered, hopefully holding out until he can liberate the compound next season.



The smaller your castle, the harder it is to defend.



Holding the attackers at the front gate is the way to keep them out.



Oh dear, so much for the 'holding' tactics. They're in.

GODS AND GUNS

Inevitably, a few years into playing *Shogun*, the Portuguese land on your shores (starting on the west coast of Japan), offering Christianity and gunpowder. Unfortunately, until the Dutch arrive later on, you can't have one without the other and switching from Buddhism to Catholicism can cause problems among some of your people. If you do accept His Holiness the Pope into your lives, your troops will no longer fear the devout warrior monks of your Buddhist rivals, but unless you build churches to worship the 'one true God', the Catholics may come down pretty heavy on you. So what do you do? Stay Buddhist we say, they always have the best lines.

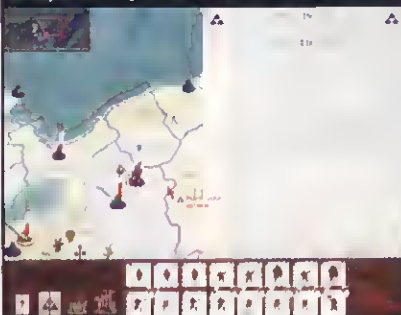


A friend of the Pope, bearing guns and Christianity.

RISING SON

Rather than playing the role of an immortal deity, directing the destiny of your people from the comfort of a chair in the clouds, in *Shogun* you play the commander-in-chief, whether he be safe in his war room or on the battlefield commanding his troops. Put him in the firing line however, and although he'll have an effect on the troops around him, if he has no heir, your clan will cease to be if he is cut down in the field of battle. Safer to let your generals muddy their boots, stay at home in your castle and make sweet love with your concubines. Of course, no matter where you go, there's always the danger that a ninja is stalking you.

At 96, this daimyo has had a good innings.



HAPPY FAMILIES

Whichever clan you choose to control, you'll start with a number of regions under your domain. Some samurai families are split across the map, some with huge empires and scant resources. Consequently, some are harder to succeed with than others. Similarly, when it comes to diplomacy, some daimyo will offer alliances and then break them at the first opportunity.

CLAN MORI



Deeply religious, Clan Mori can recruit and maintain warrior monks at a relatively low cost and they start off with a sizeable army. Their land is rich, although with four clans nearby, maintaining alliances will be important.

CLAN HOJO



Perhaps the easiest clan to begin with, Hojo start with more money and their lands are fertile and grouped together. With castles that are cheaper to produce than their rivals, Clan Hojo is a good defensive choice.

CLAN ODA



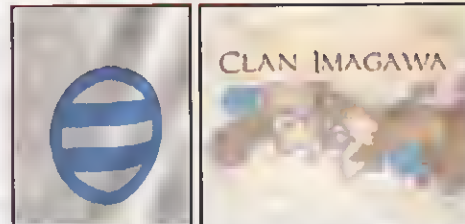
Clan Oda hold the centre of Japan and are placed within striking distance of a number of other families. Their ability to recruit peasants cheaply, combined with being close to a number of Ronin-controlled regions, means they should be able to expand quickly.

CLAN UESUGI



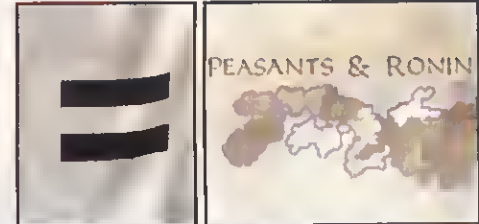
With its land rich with minerals, Clan Uesugi has the potential to be one of Japan's richest clans. Cornered into the west of Japan, it is also a good clan to start the game with, however, its coffers are relatively empty in the beginning.

CLAN IMAGAWA



Careful negotiation is required when controlling Clan Imagawa, with their lands split across Japan they're open to attack from just about everyone. However, Imagawa starts with two ninja units, and can recruit ninja and spies cheaply. Its archers are pretty hot property as well.

RONIN



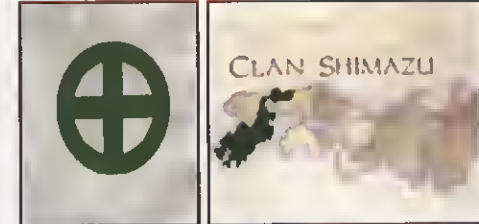
Although you cannot control them, the Ronin are a fragmented group of lesser clans – rebellious peasants and rogue samurai. As clans fall, their lands are taken over by Ronin and peasant warriors and although they are not the most organised bunch, they can commit great numbers.

CLAN TAKEDA



Like Imagawa, Clan Takeda's lands are divided into two separate masses. However, Lord Takeda has the means to transfer armies between the ports of its two fragmented regions, which start with quite a number of cavalry units between them. You must be careful though, talk is cheap with Takeda and he cannot be trusted.

CLAN SHIMAZU



Known for their swordsmen, Clan Shimazu are bordered by Clan Mori, the fractured lands of Lord Imagawa and rebel factions to the east. Unfortunately resources are scant to begin with, but if you can build up an army quickly, you should soon be able to move eastward. Shimazu will be offered guns before any of the other clans.

SECOND OPINION

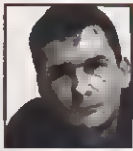
Just so you don't think Richie Shoemaker is being blinded by his love of geisha girls, we thought we'd best get some further opinions

MARK HILL



I can honestly say that *Shogun* is the first RTS I have ever been truly excited about. While feudal Japan doesn't turn me on quite as much as *Star Wars* (see *Force Commander* review, page 88), I still find it fascinating. What really makes it special is the sense of scale, the interface, the *Risk* elements, the fact that you can send ninjas out on assassination missions. The real deal clincher for me though, is the fact that you can issue commands while the game is paused. Pure genius! I've always been too slow-witted to plan strategies while a frantic battles rages on the screen. A mad panic rush of clicking on everything usually results in massacres I don't feel I've had any control over. With *Shogun*, the feeling of control is superlative, making it the ideal strategy game, even for those who aren't big fans of the genre.

DAVE WOODS



I'm not a massive fan of RTS games, but I was looking forward to *Shogun*, and now it has arrived I'm completely hooked. I agree with Richie in that it's different to any other game that's out there. The sense of scale is amazing and it's definitely a lot more real than the glut of C&C-type clones I've had to endure over the past 12 months. If you're into the genre buy it straight away. If not, buy it, give it a chance and if you're not utterly convinced after a couple of days you've got my permission to seek me out and thump me in the head.

MARTIN KORDA



I've been waiting years for a game which combined huge battles, realistic graphics and great atmosphere. *Shogun* has all of these things and so much more. With literally thousands of warriors on screen at a time, finally we have a game on the market that brings some sense of realism to combat. If like me, you're sick of waging war with just 30 or 40 units, then it won't disappoint. This is the way forward for the genre and Creative Assembly must be applauded for taking the lead. It's a software masterpiece and shouldn't be missed by anyone – whether you like RTS games or not. A *PC ZONE* 'Classic' if ever I've seen one.

CHRIS ANDERSON



Shogun is undoubtedly revolutionary in the real-time strategy genre, but I have to admit oriental units are not my 'thing'. Having said that, I really like the *Risk*-style battle for territory, and I will play it extensively for that reason alone. It somehow makes a lot more sense to be fighting for regional supremacy for an entire country as opposed to fighting solitary battles in order to 'complete' a campaign. Graphically I prefer the style of *Age Of Empires II*, which may not be 3D, but certainly looks a lot prettier from my point of view. But regardless of minor niggles and individual tastes aside *Shogun* represents a major leap forward for the RTS genre, and as such deserves a huge round of applause from gamers all over the globe.

before you move in to attack. It you manage to build the required buildings later on in the games, you can train geishas, masterful in the arts of diplomacy, spying and assassination and pretty much safe from harm from all but the most well-trained ninja.

YES, YOUR HONOUR

Experience – or in *Shogun's* case, honour – will play a large part in the game. Ninjas who manage to assassinate a number of low-ranking generals have a greater chance of taking out higher-ranking ones later on. On the battlefield, units that kill ever-increasing numbers of the enemy also increase in skill, eventually to the point where they reach

run from the field of battle. It goes without saying that high-honour generals are way up there on an enemy ninja's contract list.

DIE KATANA

So far then, you should know that *Shogun* is pretty much alone in what it does as a strategy game. Closest to it in terms of scope would probably be *Braveheart*, last year's freeform 3D real-timer from Red Lemon Studios. In that, the aim was much like it is in *Shogun*, except whereas in *Braveheart* the only real way of winning was to unite warring factions, *Shogun* is won when you decimate them.

Braveheart's major problem was that it tried to do too much –

battles and traditional castle sieges. *Shogun* doesn't have these features because if it had 3D soldiers running around, you would only be able to get a couple of hundred on the screen rather than thousands. Consequently, each man is a scaleable bitmap, reduced down to the point that you can easily distinguish between your armies. You may not be able to see heads being severed, or arrows piercing eye sockets, but what you get to see are the most epic battles ever seen on a PC, with hundreds and thousands of samurai, archers, cavalry and spearmen, wheeling around, charging and routing in every corner of the screen.

Of course, night battles would

sometimes have that painted on look. However, berating *Shogun* for its graphics is like slating *Half-Life* for using the old *Quake* engine. *Shogun*, as you should have gathered by now, is not about fancy 3D graphics. As hinted at in the title, it is about total war – a subject that it covers with consummate ease.

You may be wondering whether, as a disillusioned real-time strategy fan, stung by the likes of *Tiberian Sun*, *Shogun* will appeal to you. The answer is that it most definitely will. If you like turn-based games, you'll find more than enough to ponder over. Even people who have an inherent loathing for strategy games will enjoy *Shogun* because its rules are just so damned simple. You don't have to wade through a manual to find out how much damage your archers will do to a castle because they won't do any. They may have made a few tweaks for the sake of gameplay, but the developers have made one of the most authentic strategy games you could ever hope to play – a game as much for military historians as it is for *Quake* fans.

If you want realism, historical accuracy, atmosphere and replayability, *Shogun* stands head and shoulders above everything else. It also breathes new life into

“If you want realism, historical accuracy, atmosphere and replayability, Shogun stands head and shoulders above everything else. It also breathes new life into a stale genre.”

legendary status and you can build 'Master' and 'Legendary' dojos, which can churn out higher quality troops. Generals also gain honour by defending or capturing territory, which in turn affects the troops under them in the battles to come. Even the daimyo himself will earn honour from the success of his generals and, if put on the battlefield, can have a massive effect on the troops around him. Lose him to a stray arrow, however, and not only could your game be over, but there's a good chance that your entire army will

had too many good ideas, and consequently all of them appeared watered down and rushed along, as if the developer had gone too far to turn back. With *Shogun*, there are no such problems, the strategic section of the game is streamlined and simple, the tactical 3D just as much so and together you have a game that is both easy to learn and hard to master, which is just how a good game should be.

What *Braveheart* did have that *Shogun* doesn't, is 3D polygon-based units, day and night time



She may look harmless, but this lady is one of the deadliest units in the game.

a stale genre. Like *Championship Manager* is to football, and *Half-Life* is to first-person action, so *Shogun* is to real-time strategy. The fact that it slaps traditional wargaming across the face by being totally absorbing, realistic and fun is simply a bonus. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Epic battles that are easy to control • Strong AI • Involving campaign game • The list is endless...
- DOWNERS** You can't play the campaign game online – yet • The graphics may soon date

93 The most realistic, involving and playable strategy game you're likely to find

ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HOKUM

★ £29.99 • Empire • Out now

Contrary to popular belief helicopters aren't difficult to fly, they're just incredibly fiddly and Paul Presley knows all about fiddling (taxes, expense claims, with himself, etc)

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** Try for a PII 300, 128Mb RAM and a decent D3D-compatible accelerator card.



Helicopter fans across the world are waiting with baited breath for the forthcoming MicroProse release, *Gunship!* Consequently, *Comanche Hokum* has slipped out almost unnoticed, despite the fact that it delivers almost everything you want in a sim.

The game's biggest plus point is the brilliant job it does of creating a dynamic and believable campaign. The wars feel more real than anywhere else (even better than *Team Alligator's* engine several months ago – the real-time map helps here) and the ease with which you can keep track of any of the units engaged is amazing. At times you just want to sit back and let it fight the whole battle itself and, thanks to a very intuitive camera system, it's easy enough to do. Filters can be set up so that you only watch certain types of units, or you can switch on the cinematic camera and let it jump to wherever the action is taking place. All wars should be fought this way. Well, all virtual ones anyway.

Having said that we should probably also point out that it ties really well too. Both helicopters are highly manoeuvrable, but handle with enough distinctions to set them apart (you'll probably spend most of your time just playing on one side until you get

used to it). We wouldn't go as far as to say that they handle any differently to their incarnations in other sims – we couldn't tell much difference between flying the Hokum here or in *Team Alligator* – but then apart from having someone pushing our bodies back into the seat to simulate G-forces, it's hard to see how the realism can progress any further these days.

ANALLY RETENTIVE DETAIL

Graphically, flight sims seemed to reach a plateau about six months ago. *Comanche Hokum* looks superbly whizzo and all that thanks to the miracles of modern 3D card technology, but aside from a few textures here and there and the occasional lighting effect, it doesn't really look any more impressive than most of the other flight sims out there. Certainly there's very little to choose from between this, *Team Alligator* or *Apache Havoc* from a visual standpoint. The explosions are better (if a little spherical) and the 3D modelling of the individual soldiers in the infantry units is up there with the kind of models seen in games such as *Hidden & Dangerous*.

Where *Comanche Hokum* does score points over the competitors is in the little details that Razorworks has added. The various pilots are all in 3D and move around in their seats very realistically. The non-player controlled units are all excellently detailed too (a feature often overlooked), even down to the little Hummvees buzzing about.

And it that isn't a minute enough level of detail for you, then find one of the stationary soldiers in the game, put the camera on top for a few moments and wait for one of the funniest sights in gaming for ages. We'll say no more.

YO, 'SUP?

So why isn't it a 'Classic'? Well, aside from the fact that we'd lose all vestiges of street cred and be forever dissed by our homies if we gave the first of our new skool 'Classic' awards to a helicopter sim, there are certain points in the game where you wish Razorworks had gone just a little further than they did.

First and foremost, why can't you plan missions on the war screen rather than just having to wait around for the computer to make them available? Granted this is a helicopter sim not a full-on wargame, but it wouldn't have taken much to let you assign missions yourself, taking a more pro-active role in each war,

“The wars feel more real than anywhere else and the ease with which you can keep track of the units engaged is amazing”

making you feel a bit more involved with things. It's true that the campaign engine does an incredible job of conjuring up a sense of a real war constantly progressing, and that it's simplicity itself to just go in and check any part of it at will, but there are times when you want to take hold of it and run things yourself.

Secondly, why is there no mission editor? These days military flight sims seem to come with either a decent dynamic campaign engine or a comprehensive mission editor (such as *Flanker 2.0* or *F/A-18 Korea*), but never both. *Falcon 4.0* was an exception, but it suffered in terms of presentation. No one has managed to get it right, when they do we'll have our 'Classic'.

Also, there's no training. This is one of the most overlooked aspects of most flight sims. Why is this whole genre in decline? Because we don't do enough to attract non-propheads. We've become somewhat elitist in our attitudes. Casual gamers aren't going to pick up a heavyweight-looking helicopter sim because it all looks too complicated. Without providing the newcomer with a gentle learning curve, you're just going to alienate them. Throwing them in at the deep end doesn't help anyone. Consequently, a decent training aspect is vital for flight sims these days. Why does Microsoft's *Flight Sim* range constantly feature in the top end of the charts? Because its main function is to teach you how to fly.

COMPACHE HOVOC

Anyway, that's what it doesn't have and why it isn't quite a 'Classic'. You shouldn't take anything away from the fact that what it does have is handled

superbly. The cross-compatibility with *Apache Havoc* (letting you fly the two choppers and have access to the campaigns in that game) and the promise of future compatible *Enemy Engaged* titles means that there's a lot of life in this whole series, should Razorworks decide to exploit it.

We'd go as far as to say that *Comanche Hokum* is the best helicopter sim currently available and not necessarily because of the excellence of the simulation part either. The only potential threat to it is MicroProse's forthcoming *Gunship!*

We've been lucky enough to have seen some early code for this and, while it apparently lacks the kind of dynamic campaign engine seen here, it does feel like a more heavyweight simulation

IN PERSPECTIVE

There are a couple of helicopter sims currently doing the rounds. *Team Alligator* is a decent alternative, but doesn't have the long-term appeal of *Comanche Hokum*. *Apache Havoc* is another good one and worth getting if you want to link both of the Razorworks titles together. *Longbow 2* used to be the most hardcore of the bunch, but that crown might soon be going to the forthcoming *Gunship!* (reviewed here soon, promise).

Comanche Hokum

Team Alligator

Apache Havoc

Longbow 2

(also the graphics have a dirtier, more realistic feel to them and the ground units seem to have a more believable nature – moving about looking for cover as they react to your attacks).

Of course, we'll hold our judgement until we've seen the finished thing, but the bottom line is simple. If you want a really hardcore, propeller-head helicopter simulation, then we'd wait just one or two months more. If what you want is a really involving battlefield simulator, in which you get to fly a couple of helicopters, *Comanche Hokum* is your game. ☑

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Brilliant dynamic campaign
• Atmospheric • Long-term appeal •
Links with *Apache Havoc*

DOWNERS No mission planner or editor • Lack of training options

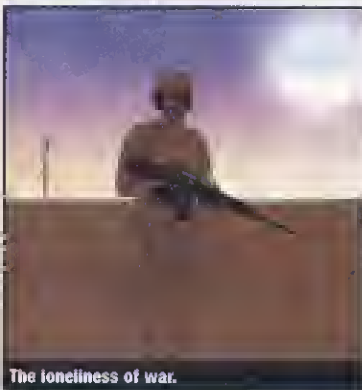
85 Might be the best, but there's one more to come



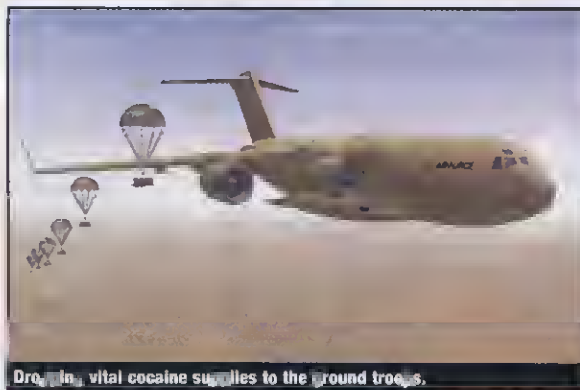
Presumably they're all stamped like that in case they get lost.



"What you looking at?"



The loneliness of war.



Drop in vital cocaine supplies to the ground troops.



Russian targeting technology is a little behind ours.



Comanches in flight, I want to see you tonillggght.



This is a helicopter sim, by the way.



Russian helicopters come tully equipped with the very latest 'What The Butler Saw' machines.



You can call in artillery strikes if you can't handle the responsibility of authorised murder.



My guess is he's not on his way to the peace talks.



He doesn't look anything like that in his passport photo.

Hey, don't shoot! I'm only the piano player... (Yeah right - BOOM! - Ed)

Soldier Of Fortune: full of meaty goodness.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

★ £34.99 • Activision • Out now

Charlie Brooker has always wanted to play a hardened vet – what better excuse to stick his fist up cows' bottoms?

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator **WE SAY** You may have to download new drivers for your 3D card to get the damn thing running. Check the README file on the CD



It isn't easy being this hypocritical, you know. On the one hand, we believe *Soldier Of Fortune* to be vile anarcho-porn of the highest and most hideous order – a shamefully slick helping of tascist super-violence designed to satisfy the xenophobic bloodlust of dunderheads, bigots, macho dickballs, and the many thousands of dangerous gun-toting, Armageddon-quickeners currently squatting inside self-built bunkers-cum-armouries in two-horse US towns with names like Jarhead, Ohio, feverishly stroking their shotguns while they pore over their bomb plans. And on the other hand? Um... we, er... we kind of like *Soldier Of Fortune*. We like it a lot actually. If you're lazy, truly lazy, then here's a capsule, sum-it-all-up-in-a-sentence review:

"*Soldier Of Fortune* is an ultra-gruesome, real-world take on the *Quake* genre that's nowhere near as good as *Half-Life*, and is demonstrably sick and wrong, yet exerts an unusual addictive pull all of its own."

OK? Now you lazybones can tootle off to the end and gawp at the score, while the rest of us have a laugh at some of the game's content.

GUNG? HO!

In *SoF*, you play a character called John Mullins. His name's John, but everyone calls him 'Jarn'. It's all "don't go in there, Jarn", and "watch your back, Jarn".

Jarn is a Vietnam vet, a firearms expert, an experienced mercenary, and easily the most laughable prick ever to have stepped foot inside a computer game since the eponymous star of the execrable *Letsure Suit Larry* games reared his wormy little head before a disinterested world.

Yes. Jarn 'Soldier of Fortune' Mullins is an absolute dingleberry. A tool of the highest order. He looks just like celebrity chef (and Sunday morning Godslot presenter) Kevin Woodford, so it's hard to take him seriously (and even harder to resist the urge to somehow twist the gun round and watch him blow his own head off). He's also totally lacking a sense of humour. This man takes

himself more seriously than Goebbels, as do his mates at 'The Shop' (the shadowy organisation of mercenaries for which he 'works'). In fact, every single person in the game stomps around pulling expressions of utter, steely-eyed seriousness, delivering duff lines with such grim self-importance, you keep hoping – praying – that one of them'll blow off in their combats or something, just to break the ice a bit and make them smile. If you had to sit next to one of them at a dinner party, you'd probably end up taking your own life with a cheese knife before the main course hit the table.

Jarn spends most of the game ostensibly searching for an über-terrorist named Dekker, who spends most of *his* time cropping up in engine-vision cut-scenes, cackling and blowing the heads off unarmed hostages at point-blank range. He's easily the most ludicrously over-the-top villain you'll have seen in your life — even if you've spent your entire life watching Sky Movies.

HEAVY ON THE AIR MILES

Fortunately for Jarn, who's clearly unhinged himself, tracking down Dekker (and, er, his stolen nuclear warheads) involves visiting a host of glamorous around-the-world locations and shooting a frankly jaw-dropping number of people.

New York, Africa, Japan, Iraq, Kosovo (yes *Kosovo*), you name it, Jarn's there – blowing someone's head off. It's like watching an edition of *Holiday* hosted by those Columbine High School maniacs.

At which point, it's worth pointing out just how gruesomely violent *SoF* is. It makes *Kingpin* look like a Kinder Egg and *Carmageddon* look like *Chucklevision*. You can, quite feasibly, shoot the gun from a

“The ultra-violence is eye-poppingly hideous – but it's also perversely satisfying, in a please-God-don't-let-this-corrupt-me kinda way”

man's hand, then take his leg clean off while he begs for mercy – and *then* blow his head to jelly as he slumps, screaming, to the floor. And once he's down, you can stab him in the face, you can circle around picking off the remaining limbs with a shotgun, or you can pump round upon round of machine-gun fire into his lifeless body and watch it jerk about. This is *not* a nice game.

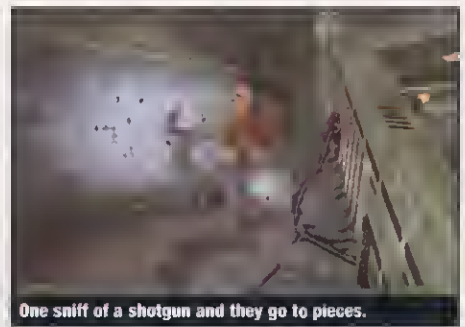
Playing this game *must* be bad for you. It *feels* bad for you. There



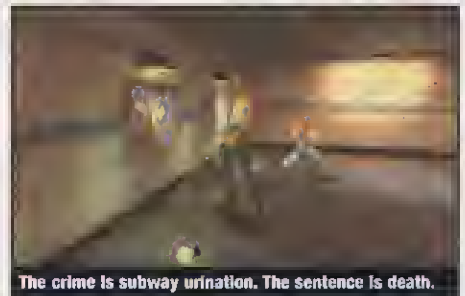
The sniper rifle is excellent... assuming you like shooting people.



Rumours of a Disney movie based on the game are likely to be unfounded.



One sniff of a shotgun and they go to pieces.



The crime is subway urination. The sentence is death.

are .44 Magnums. There are machine guns and rocket launchers. There's an excellent sniper rifle and a downright hideous flamethrower. There is screaming and bloodshed. At the end of each mission, you're given a tally listing the number of head shots, neck shots, groin shots... You'll want a bath afterwards. And then you'll go back to finish off the next level. Why?

BECAUSE IT'S FUN

It's undeniably fun to play. The levels aren't particularly taxing, but they are (on the whole) imaginatively designed. The real-world setting adds to the thrill, as does – and we're almost ashamed to admit this – the outrageous level of violence. The graphics are exemplary throughout, as is the use of sound (the music's a bit sucky, but it is 'dynamic' – ie it reacts to the action).

The weird (and slightly frightening) thing is, if *Sof* was set in the spaceports of Mars, or the fictional netherland of Eternia, or wherever, it's doubtful whether it would have held our attention for so long. Fact is, the nigh-on pornographic buzz of spraying a modern-day office with gunfire, taking limbs off be-suited, screaming enemies left, right, and centre, while a standard neon strip-light buzzes overhead, keeps you glued. That may be wrong, but it's the honest truth.

The ultra-violence is eye-poppingly hideous – but it's also (whisper it quietly) *perversely satisfying*, in a please-God-don't-let-this-corrupt-me kinda way. But it would mean nothing were the game itself not so damn playable. *Soldier Of Fortune* is a

IN PERSPECTIVE

Half-Life is the original and still the best. You'll have played it already, so you might want to consider *Kingpin*, another gore-sodden shooter, this time on a 'gangsta tip' rather than a xenophobe groove. Ahem. If you want something a bit more cranial, play *System Shock 2*. If you haven't played it, you don't know what you're missing. One of the scariest games of all time.

Half-Life	████████████████████
Kingpin	██████████████████
System Shock 2	██████████████████
Soldier Of Fortune	██████████████████

balls-out, whisky-swilling, flag-waving, carbine-smoking, xenophobic, fascist, *cathartic* arcade game that you'll end up playing more than you should.

It probably deserves to be banned – but while it's here, let's enjoy it *quietly*. Oh, and we'd recommend taking short breaks to read some Enid Blyton or a *Mr Men* book or something.

May God have mercy on our souls. ☹️

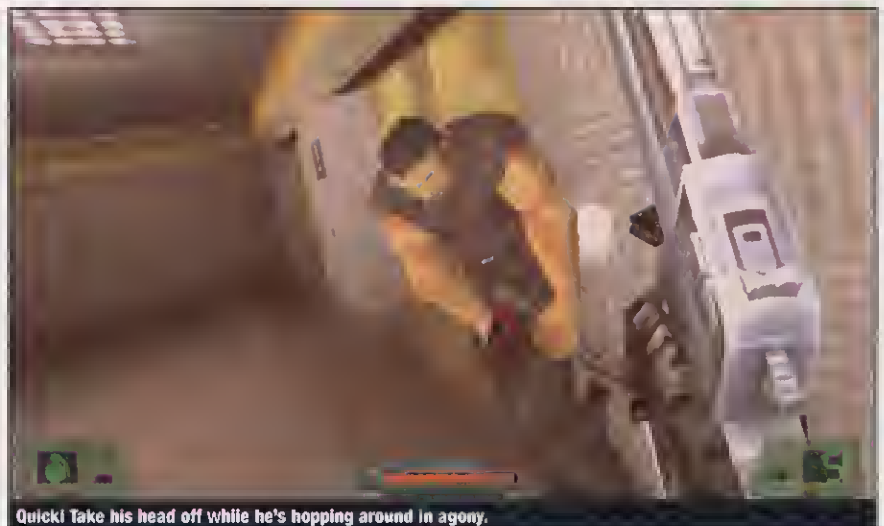
PCZ VERDICT

- ⬆️ **UPPERS** It's fun • Lots of hideous weaponry • Great visuals and sound
- ⬇️ **DDWNERS** May turn you into a serial killer

80 Play this game and you will burn in hell, we all will



That's 'Jarn' Mullins on the left. His mate Hawk is on the right. They're both tossers.



Quick! Take his head off while he's hopping around in agony.

JANE'S F/A-18

★ £34.99 • EA • Out now

Who is Jane? And why does she have all these planes? Well *Dave Mathieson's* buggered if he knows...

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct3D graphics card **WE SAY** PIV/Celeron 400, 16Mb graphics card



There are plenty of flight sims out there vying for the attention of sad non-pilots, and most of them are based around

American jets beginning with an 'F'. One of the best of these games in recent times has been *Jane's F-15*, a super-realistic simulation of the US Airforce's scariest strike aircraft. *Jane's F/A-18* is the latest sim from the developer of *F-15*, Skunkworks, and the fact that the excellent *Longbow 2* hails from the same stable indicates that this new title is likely to be a corker.

The *F/A-18E Super Hornet* is the US Navy's latest fighter. It's packed with the latest electronics

“The graphics engine is one of the best around, and *F-15*'s terrain and modelling have been completely revamped”

and can carry enough weapons to kill the entire population of Basingstoke a couple of times over, probably even if they weren't all drinking in the same pub at the same time. Unlike the *F-15E* from the earlier sim, the *F/A-18* is designed to be equally good as both a fighter and ground attack plane, which means roughly equal amounts of dogfighting and bombing. Better still, most of the action takes place from aircraft carriers, with the attendant easy-peasy catapult take-offs and ridiculously tough landings.

The interface in *F/A-18* is very similar to that in *F-15*, it's pretty functional and straightforward and provides access to the different mission types: instant action, single, multiplayer,

campaign and training. There's a particularly good starter mission, covered in the first chapter of the excellent manual, where you get to destroy a MiG and bomb some fuel tanks. Obviously, this won't keep you interested for very long, but there are plenty of training and single missions to get you up to speed. Instant action follows the now familiar formula whereby you pick the number of planes on your side, the number and type of baddies, time of day, etc. Exactly what's needed when you can't be arsed to play proper missions and just fancy shooting at things.

Ultimately, *F/A-18* is not as accessible as *Falcon 4*, but that's only a minor criticism.

THE REAL THING

Of course, there's no point in having lots of interesting missions to fly if the in-game graphics are useless. Guess what? They're not. In fact, they're rather good. The cockpit and systems in *F/A-18*

are incredibly detailed, and everything's clickable (although you can obviously use the keyboard to do most of it). Instead of the more common combined 2D and 3D cockpits found in most sims, *F/A-18* has only a 3D virtual cockpit (although there are zoomed-in views of the individual displays when you need to change something). This cockpit works fine though, especially if you've got the hardware to run at 1,024x768 resolution. The feeling of sitting in a real plane is pretty much as good as you could get without some kind of virtual reality helmet thing, especially when waiting to launch from the pitching deck of a carrier. The avionics must be pretty realistic, because they're suitably

IN PERSPECTIVE

Falcon 4 is still our fave flight sim, but *F/A-18* and *Flanker* aren't far behind. It depends what level of realism you're looking for.

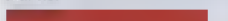
Falcon 4



F/A-18



Flanker



complicated and it's hard to believe that real combat pilots have to cope with anything harder than this stuff in combat. Although off-putting at first, once you manage to get your head round all the controls the sense of achievement and immersion is huge.

The graphics engine itself is one of the best around, and *F-15*'s terrain and modelling have been completely revamped. The sense of speed at low levels is awesome, and spotting the carrier in the distance with the sun shining almost makes you want to write poetry. Clouds and explosions have a similar awe-inspiring

effect. In short, the graphics are gorgeous.

So basically, *F/A-18* is a kind of sequel to *F-15*, with vastly improved graphics, more dogfighting, more weapons and carrier landings. Oh, and it's got an even better mission editor. If you like your sims realistic, *F/A-18* probably sounds perfect. It just about is. [22]

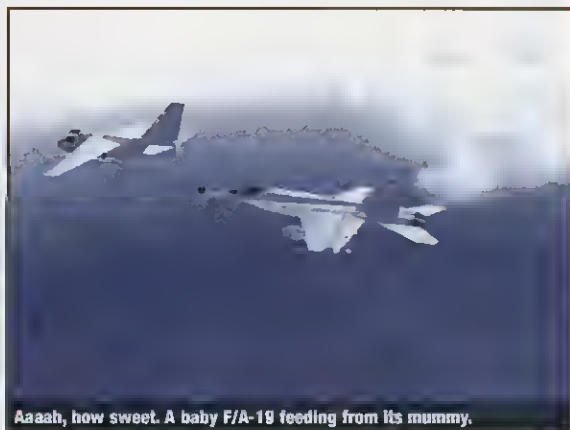
PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Incredibly detailed •

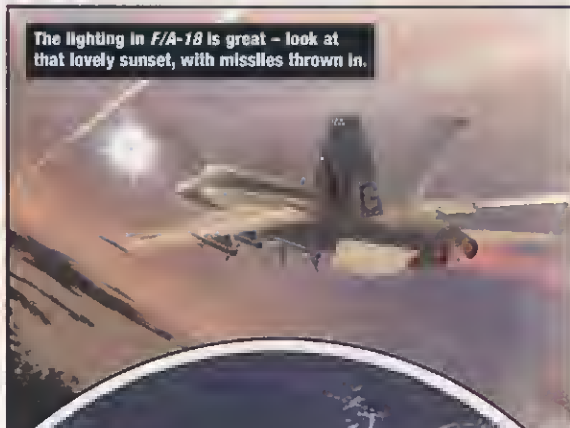
Excellent graphics and manual

DOWNERS Perhaps too realistic for some • Unoriginal

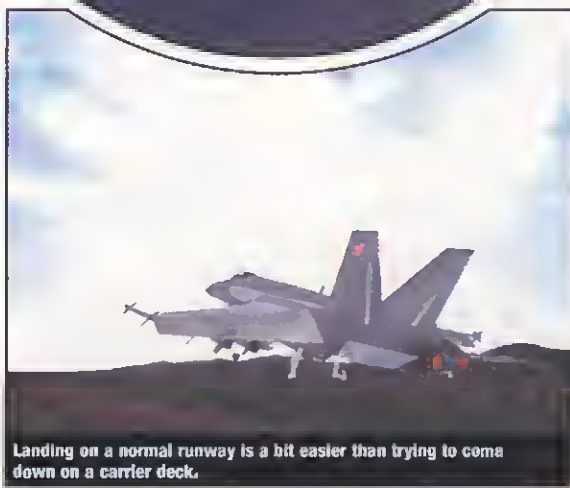
84 Probably the most complete sim of a single plane



Aaaah, how sweet. A baby *F/A-18* feeding from its mummy.



The lighting in *F/A-18* is great - look at that lovely sunset, with missiles thrown in.



Landing on a normal runway is a bit easier than trying to come down on a carrier deck.

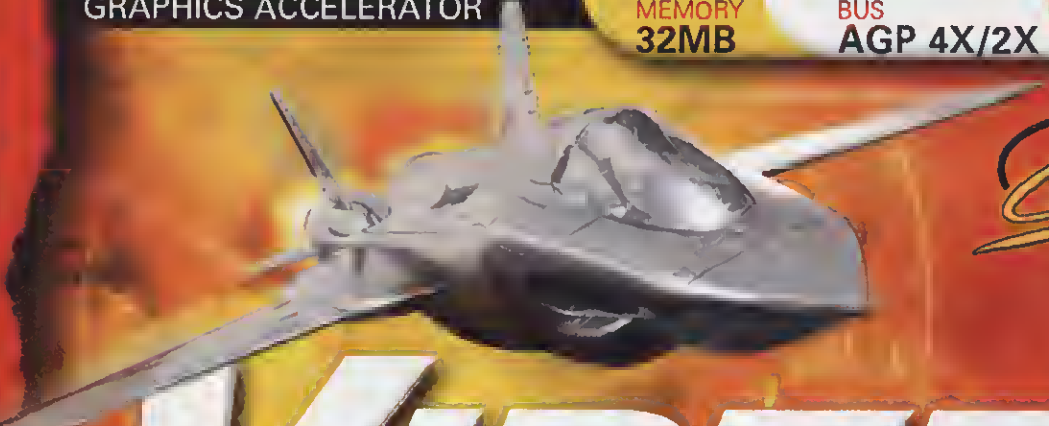
GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR

MEMORY
32MB

BUS
AGP 4X/2X

CONTROLLER
S3 SAVAGE 2000

DIAMOND



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Token chick alert. Raven provides the game's 'love interest'.

★ £34.99 • EA
• Out Now

ULTIMA

After repeated delays, *Ascension* has made it to the UK. Has Origin finally cleaned up the most bug-ridden RPG ever to (dis)grace a PC? Yes and no, says Chris Anderson

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card
WE SAY Don't make me laugh, no please, don't. Get yourself a Pentium III and 128Mb RAM, unless you want to be playing this in low-res jerk-a-vision. While you're at it get a Voodoo 2 or better if you don't already have one.

The trials and tribulations surrounding the release of *Ascension* in the US last November have been well documented in this magazine. The game was so bugged when it was released in the US that it has taken Origin five months (and three major patches) to clean it up and get it ready for release in Europe.

The good news is the UK version of *Ascension* is much more stable than the patched US version (don't be fooled by the reviews you may have read in other UK games mags which were based on a version of the game you will never see, and were a work of fiction as a result). It is still far from perfect (see the Bugwatch boxout for exact details of the bugs Origin

couldn't sort out), but at least it is finally playable – more than can be said for the US version, which is still in a mess if reports on the Internet are to be believed. Finally, we can take a good long look at the game which ends the trilogy of trilogies, the game that so many *Ultima* fans have waited so long for, the game that ends a series which has been a landmark in PC gaming for so many years, and after five long years in development, it had better be good. Unfortunately...

TOMB RAIDER ANYONE?

Ultima Ascension is not an RPG by any stretch of the imagination. It is what is known in the industry as an 'action adventure'. Depending on how you look at it, this may not necessarily be a bad

thing, but it certainly wasn't what *Ultima* fans were expecting from a game of this importance, being the last game of the series as we know it. If leaping about in dungeons and flicking switches is your thing, this is the game for you. On the other hand, if you're expecting *Ascension* to be 'Planescape: Torment in 3D' you will be sorely disappointed. There are some token RPG elements in the game, but if you blink you will surely miss them. Even the character generation process at the beginning is largely pointless.

Character generation is done through the standard *Ultima* routine of answering a gypsy's questions and arriving at a virtue that determines your class for the duration of the game, but the class you choose makes little or no difference to the gameplay. Whether you choose to be a fighter or a magic user is entirely up to you, but the difference between the two will exist quite literally in your mind. To the rest of the world you will still appear to be a multiclass jack of all trades, donning whatever weapons and armour you see fit and casting whatever spells take your fancy. After the incredibly complex and satisfying character development system Origin

created for the excellent *Ultima Online*, *Ascension* comes across as being painfully shallow. Long-standing *Ultima* fans will play this game and think 'how could they do this to the *Ultima* series?'. Conversely, new gamers brought up on a diet of *Duque* and *Tomb Raider* clones may well take this simplistic 'RPG for babies' to their

the object of the game is thus: the shrines of Britannia have become corrupt. You must restore them all by going into a dungeon close to each shrine, killing some monsters, flicking a few switches, leaping about a lot, and in doing so restoring the shrines in question one by one. That, literally, is *Ultima Ascension* in a

“*Ascension* looks less like the epic finale we hoped for and more like a cynical cash-in at the expense of the legion of *Ultima* fans”

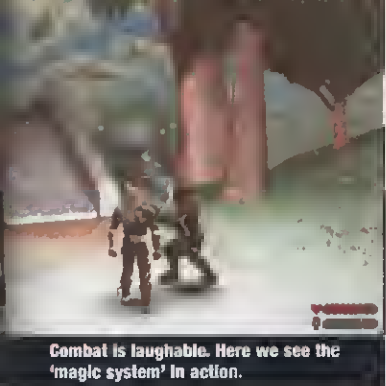
hearts. Regardless of this, one thing you could always count on with *Ultima* games is a constantly evolving and engrossing plot, which immerses you fully in Britannia and its environs and colourful characters. Oh dear... another disappointment looms.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

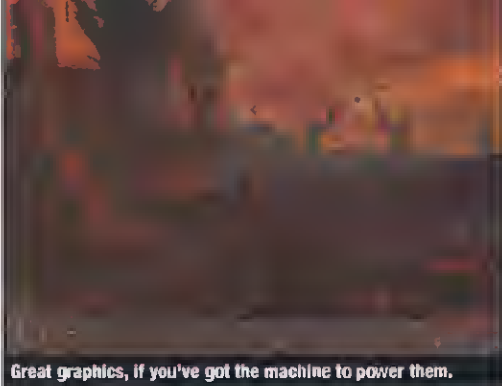
It wasn't enough for Origin to take the greatest RPG series of all time and turn it into a simplistic dungeon romp. The programmers evidently decided that a plot of any complexity would simply be too much for the new generation of gamers to take, so they quite literally did away with any semblance of a plot or storyline whatsoever. By way of example,

nutshell. If that sounds a little too repetitive and tedious for your taste, you should try actually doing it. I played *Ascension* for many, many hours and I had a distinct feeling of déjà vu after 'completing' a shrine and then journeying to the next town only to discover that I had to repeat the whole process.

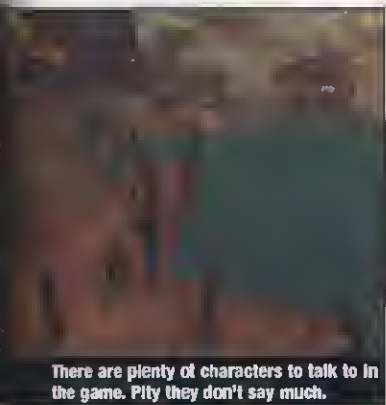
Admittedly there are many sub-quests which presumably are meant to provide brief respite from the endless shrine-fixing nonsense, but they are all boring and pointless in the extreme, without exception. If you are the sort of person who can be bothered hunting round the place for a water valve and returning it to the character who asked you



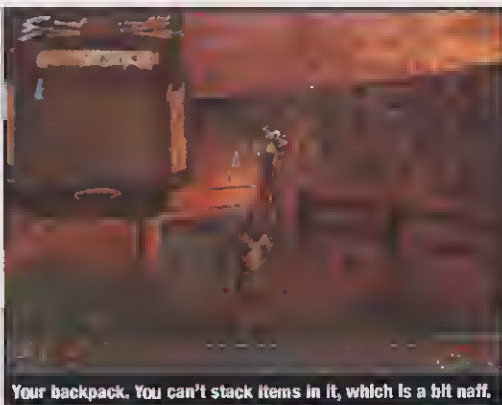
Combat is laughable. Here we see the 'magic system' in action.



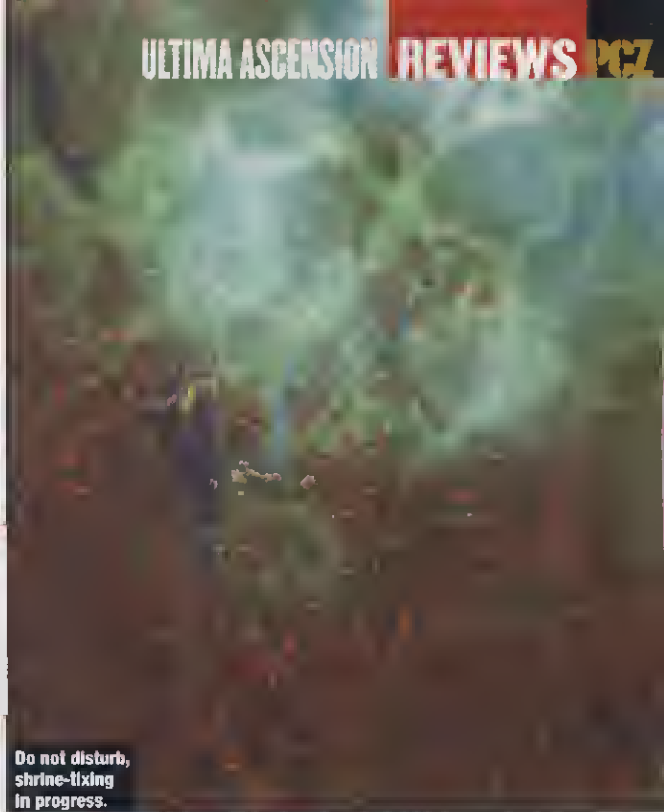
Great graphics, if you've got the machine to power them.



There are plenty of characters to talk to in the game. Pity they don't say much.



Your backpack. You can't stack items in it, which is a bit naff.



Do not disturb, shrine-fixing in progress.

ASCENSION

for it, you will be rewarded with a 'thank you' from the citizen in question. That's it. No treasure, no secret items, and no gold to reward you for your efforts. As a result you are unlikely to venture out on the next pointless quest when the opportunity is presented.

There are other problems too. Conversations with characters in Britannia are totally uninspiring. The character voice-overs (which incidentally are abysmal) dictate that the text is identical, so complex conversational routes are a no-no. Couple this with a highly comical combat system (frantic mouse-clicking as you wave your weapon about randomly is the order of the day), and a spellbook with lots of spells which is nice but not necessary, except when you need to heal yourself or cast light spells in the dark, and suddenly *Ultima Ascension* is beginning to look less like the epic finale we all hoped for and more like a cynical cash-in at the expense of the vast legion of *Ultima* fans.

SO, IT'S CRAP THEN?

Not quite. Ironically, *Ultima* fans are likely to extract more entertainment from this game than the action adventure lads the product is aimed at. There is

much to be said for walking round a 3D Britannia for the first time. The towns in the game may be ludicrously small compared to their counterparts in *Ultima Online*, but I defy you not to feel a surge of nostalgia as you walk into Britannia and see it in all its 3D glory. The dungeon sections are perfectly acceptable and even engrossing in places, though you are led by the hand through most of them. And the graphics are breathtaking in places. We have said time and time again that graphics are not important, but we lied. *Ascension* has incredible graphics and a wonderful atmosphere. The familiar lands of Britannia come to life before your very eyes, and for many *Ultima* fans this alone will be enough.

The same cannot be said for non-*Ultima* converts, unless they are big *Tomb Raider* lads in which case they will find *Ascension* perfectly playable, but nothing special. Incidentally, spare a thought for your American gaming counterparts, who unwittingly paid good money to playtest this title for Origin so that you would get a game that was playable straight from the box. And don't forget to read the Bugwatch boxout (right), very important information lies therein. [E]

IN PERSPECTIVE

Ultima Ascension is nowhere near as involving as *Ultima VII* which looks dated now, but has a complex, believable world with characters that are both amusing and engrossing. *UA* may be a pitiful representation of the *Ultima* series, but *UVII* is the definitive one. *Planescape: Torment* is the new king of RPGs, and makes *UA* look both shallow and vacuous by comparison, which is handy, because that's exactly what it is.

Planescape: Torment

UVII parts 1 and 2

Ultima Ascension

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great graphics • Britannia in 3D • Atmospheric
DOWNERS Bugs • Linear gameplay
 • Needs a ninja PC to run it

52 Atmospheric and nostalgic, but hopelessly shallow

BUGWATCH

UA is finished, but not perfect, oh no...

When Origin released this in the US, it effectively put alpha code into a box and sold it to unsuspecting gamers all over the US. Over the last few months, while the American public has been trying to play the game, Origin has been busy completing it. Ha ha ha ha ha. Highly amusing? No. The software available in the UK is the game it should have released in the first place. Amazingly, it is still unfinished even now. Shopkeepers still float about 3ft above their chairs. Savegames still get corrupted for no apparent reason. Sound effects get 'stuck' and repeat themselves, sometimes they work again if you leave them a minute, sometimes they simply hang your machine. As for the frame-rate, don't get me started. On an Athlon 600 with 256Mb RAM and a Voodoo 3 card, the game still jerked. You *will* need a killer machine to get this thing to run acceptably. D3D support is still suspect, particularly on TNT2 cards (and notoriously on a GeForce). If you *really* want to play *Ascension*, buy a Voodoo 2 card or better, if you don't already have one. Despite all this, the game is playable for the first time since its release. *Ascension* has been cleaned up considerably during the course of the three huge patches it has had since November, but it is no easy ride. And don't expect any new patches either. Origin closed the official *Ultima Ascension* website and announced there would be no more patches after patch 3, which was nice – in one fell swoop disowning all the people who had bought the game and moving on to other projects. My advice to you is very simple: if you really want to buy this game, you go right ahead and buy it, but buy it from somewhere that has a no-quibble, money-back policy, so if you have too many problems you can send it back from whence it came. You have been warned.

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A FLIGHT OF FANTASY



Action-packed 3D shoot 'em-up set over 10 stunning fantasy landscapes with frenetic multi-player features
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EVOLVA

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After Sergeant Peppa, Ubba Soul and Abba Road, *James Lyon* takes a look at the new album from... oh, right

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card, 480Mb HD space **WE SAY** PII and a Voodoo 3 or GeForce 256 to appreciate the visuals

On the whole, eggs aren't seen as the most life-threatening force the world has ever known. In fact, anything that comes out of an arse isn't going to make you run screaming into the street, weeping at the injustice that created such repulsiveness. Aside from a politician's speech, of course. But, there is another exception, and it's the evil parasite egg that's landed on a far-off future planet in our solar system. It's spreading its foul tentacles across the continents, churning out countless creatures to consume all life in a bid to replicate itself and take over the surrounding planets.

the start of the game, but even these aren't given enough of an opportunity for distinction.

GOOD LOOKA

Considering that the developers come from an artistic background, it's a good thing that the visuals do the job. The landscapes exude an otherworldly (if a little too polished) loveliness, while there's a suitable graphical progression of environments through each of the 12 levels. Although, sadly, more often than not there's a tendency to resort to indistinct tunnels and valleys.

On another positive note, there's your Genohunter's AI, which is *almost* perfect. When not

IN PERSPECTIVE

MDK's the obvious comparison and still worth getting on budget. *Messiah*, another Shiny effort, also has similar elements to *Evolva*. And *Prince Of Persia 3D* is just plain crap.

Evolva	██████████
MDK	██████████
Messiah	██████████
Prince Of Persia	██████████

out, *Evolva* is just a straightforward shooter: clear one area, advance, clear another, etc... And if anyone mentions that I didn't use the proper flanking tactics and strategies described, I can only answer that I didn't need to.

BUT WILL IT INVOLVYA?

Evolva contains some good ideas, but it doesn't go far

“With the puzzles taken out, *Evolva* is just a straightforward shooter: clear one area, advance, clear another, etc...”

Naturally, it's up to you, controlling your four Genohunters to wade in there following standard computer game plot guidelines – ie kill everything.

So without further ado, here's what happens in *Evolva*. When you kill something you absorb its genes. Once you've collected enough, you can mutate each Genohunter with the different abilities (14 in all) of said creatures. To upgrade your character you choose from a branching selection of two paths, both leading to the raising and lowering of certain abilities. So say the makers, there's a possibility of over a billion combinations of Genohunter.

Sounds good, huh? So don't get too disappointed when you find out that the only real difference is how long you can hold the fire button down for before your weapon's energy runs out. Individual characteristics are automatically decided for you at

in your direct control they defend themselves rather well. But if they are called from the other side of the map they'll usually find the quickest way back, though (if you were wondering about that 'almost') there are some rare moments when they'll fall pointlessly to their deaths. The enemy, however, are a different matter, resorting to attacking you en masse until they die. Rarely is the time you're not surrounded on all sides by a swarm of them while you fire wildly into everything and nothing.

Evolva also falls rather easily into the clichéd 'find key/open door' variety of puzzles. Or 'find reactive plant spores and blow up large rock', if you want to be more precise. Which means such situations as clearing a level and then spending ages wandering around the empty land searching for an elusive spore that just happens to be stuck high on the ceiling. With the puzzles taken

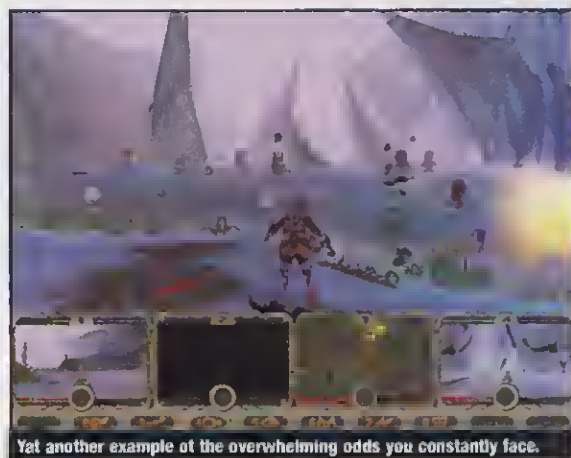
PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Eye-pleasing visuals • Mutation features a nice idea • Multiplayer deathmatch • Great Intro
- DOWNERS Clichéd puzzles • Hardly any need for tactics • Suspect enemy AI • Disappointing end sequence

69 Good on the surface – not enough inside to make it great



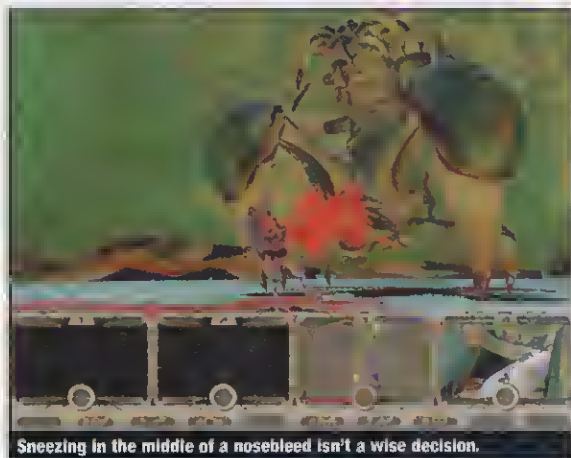
“That's the last time I play rugby with you lot.”



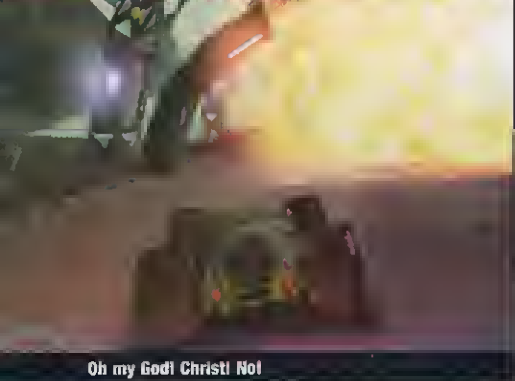
Yet another example of the overwhelming odds you constantly face.



Everybody loves an explosion.



Sneezing in the middle of a nosebleed isn't a wise decision.



Oh my God! Christ! No!



Split-screen mode and everything.



Look at me, I'm driving a buggy at 305mph.



Get out of the way or I'll kill you.



Imagine that when you're tripping.

ROLLCAGE STAGE II

★ £29.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

Steve Hill experiences flashing lights and colours in his head. Again

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb D3D graphics card **WE SAY** P450 and at least 64Mb of RAM

Oh, hark at it. *Stage II*, as it they're taking gaming to the next level or something. Nonsense, this is *Rollcage II*, plain and simple, a premature sequel to the over-rated futuristic racer, or as the press release would have it: "The breathtaking, ultra-destructive, hi-octane, 360 degree racing game that took the gaming world by storm last year." Effectively *WipeOut* on wheels, *Rollcage* was the kind of game that probably had PlayStation magazines describing it as the perfect post-pub experience, one of the more banal clichés thrown up by the gaming press in recent years. It sitting in a darkened room with a bunch of pissed men playing a

simple-minded game is the perfect post-pub experience, then they've clearly misunderstood what a pub is for.

Whatever, *Rollcage* was alright for half an hour, it somewhat blighted by a disorientating camera system that would often leave the player with little clue as to the whereabouts of either

"It all looks mighty impressive, but doesn't offer a particularly satisfying drive, with no real purchase to be had on the road"

his arse or his elbow, not to mention his futuristic buggy. *Stage II* comes with a "new and improved" system, which alleges to ensure that you always know

which way you're supposed to be going. Something of a prerequisite in a racing game, one might think, and it's a shame that no one saw fit to implicate it in the first game. What is *Stage II* then? A glorified patch?

MURKY

Of course not, although to the untrained eye this game and its prequel might appear largely interchangeable. Sequels are a murky area at best, but particularly so in racing games. Unless gargantuan leaps of technology are being made, then improvements are only ever going to be incremental, if there actually

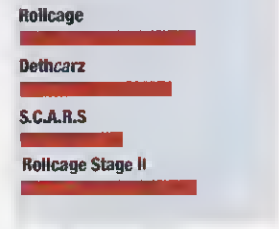
are any. And with a game such as *Rollcage*, that has no basis in reality whatsoever, there is even less of an argument for a follow up. At least racing games that

replicate real sports can attempt to justify themselves with seasonal updates, but when you're talking about heavily armed buggies that can drive on the ceiling, you might as well just ask people to send you their money.

In its favour, *Rollcage Stage II* has some 14 different game modes. Not in its favour, some of them are a bit dull. The racing is the same as it ever was though, with the freedom of movement making it possible to keep the acceleration button pressed at all times, with little consideration given to traditional mainstays of the genre such as timing and braking. Naturally, it all looks mighty impressive, but doesn't offer a particularly satisfying drive, with no real purchase to be had on the road. There is little subtlety involved, and races often degenerate into a pyrotechnic free-for-all, bereft of any real tension or excitement. Beneath the superficial exterior, it's a pretty shallow experience, and in all honesty you'd be better off staying in the pub. [E]

INPERSPECTIVE

Rollcage Stage II is as good as the original, but it should have been better. You haven't really got much option as far as this genre of games goes. Everything else is significantly worse, especially *S.C.A.R.S.*



PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Looks all right • Some minor improvements
- DOWNERS Scarcely any different • It's not proper driving

52 Good-looking console game

free*

not a sausage.
gratis. with our
compliments.
f.o.c. nada. nil.

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PCZ01

RALLY MASTERS

★ £34.99 • Infogrames • Out now

Another rally game? **Steve Hill** is the master

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** A high-end card and as much memory as you can stuff in



The rally stakes are revving up apace and Infogrames has finally thrown its beret into the ring with this long-awaited effort from Swedish developers Digital Illusions. When we caught up with them at last year's E3 show, they promised to deliver the complete rally experience, combining the best elements of every rally game in the world, ever. The best part of a year on, a shiny gold disc arrives in the ZONE office and, while not exactly taking it by storm, even the normally stoic Richie Shoemaker was moved to admit: "It really is rather good."

Wise words indeed from the Shoemeister as, under intense scrutiny, *Rally Masters* has proven to be a match for any of the available rally games, simultaneously throwing down a sizeable gauntlet to the forthcoming

Colin McRae Rally 2. In fact, *Rally Masters* actually features the boy McRae, along with his brother Alister. A game that is as much about drivers as it is cars, other leading lights from the world of rallying include Ari Vatanen, Tommi Mäkinen, Stig Blomqvist, and Hannu Mikkola. In total, there are 30 past and present real world drivers – Kenjiro Shinozuka, anyone? And while this actually amounts to little more than a multisyllabic name appearing above a pretend car, knowing that McRae is on your tail is, in the parlance of Dave from *The Royle Family*, enough to have your arse going like that.

And on your tail he will be as, unlike some rally games, *Masters* features actual racing against

other cars, with all the pushing and a-shoving that this inevitably involves. With a firm nod towards the PlayStation hit *V-Rally*, four cars can compete at once and it's a near-identical representation of that game, with the requisite weaving through narrow streets in extremely closely contested affairs. *Colin McRae Rally* is also alluded to with some timed sections, and there is even a hint of *Sega Rally 2*, with several elongated powerslides to be had.

PARALLEL LINES

Where *Rally Masters* comes into its own, though, is with its replication of the increasingly popular Race Of Champions, an annual event that involves two identical cars competing side-by-side on what is effectively a

IN PERSPECTIVE

There really isn't a lot to choose between the top rally titles, although whereas other games specialise, *Rally Masters* incorporates every aspect of the sport. Which is nice.

Rally Masters

Rally Championship

Colin McRae Rally

Sega Rally 2

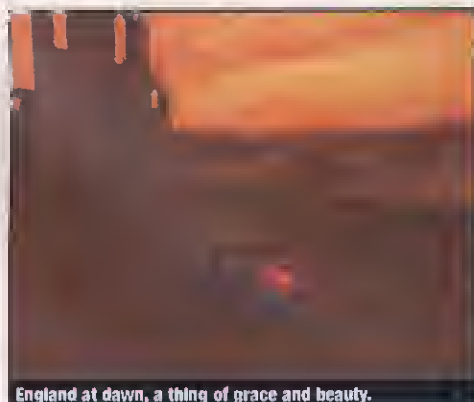
real-life Scalextric track, albeit in the Canary Islands. Competitions are conducted on a knock-out basis, with the winner of the best of three heats progressing to the next round. It's an intriguing



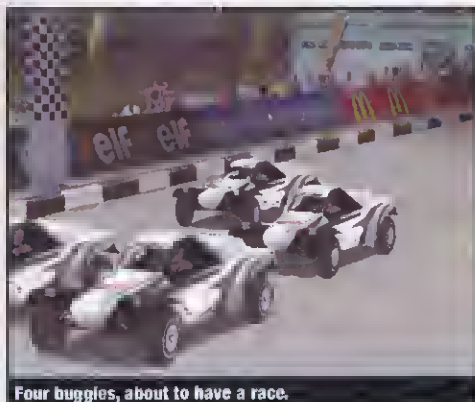
Look! Two cars racing against each other on a special track.



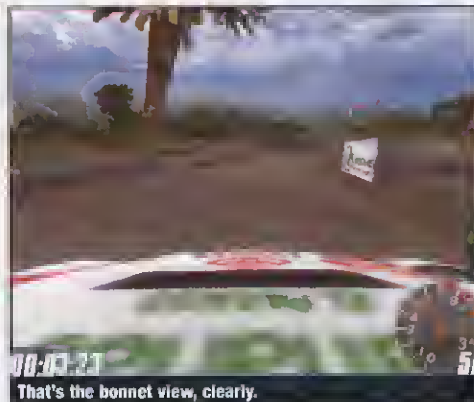
Now that's what you call a skid.



England at dawn, a thing of grace and beauty.



Four buggies, about to have a race.



That's the bonnet view, clearly.

MEET THE WACKY RACERS

If you want to know who you're up against in *Rally Masters*, here's a picture, and a list



Colin McRae's brother, of all places.

UK Colin McRae, Alister McRae.
GERMANY Armin Schwarz, Walter Röhrl.
FRANCE Didier Auriol, Gilles Panizzi, François Delecour. **ITALY** Andrea Aghini, Miki Biaslon. **SPAIN** Carlos Sainz, Jesus Puras. **BELGIUM** Freddie Loix, Bruno Thiry.
FINLAND Ari Vatanen, Tommi Mäkinen, Timo Salonen, Henri Toivonen, Juha Kankkunen, Hannu Mikkola, Marcus Grönholm. **SWEDEN** Thomas Radström, Björn Waddegard, Stig Blomqvist, Kenneth Eriksson. **PORTUGAL** Rui Madeira.
AUSTRALIA Neel Bates. **JAPAN** Yoshio Fujimoto, Kenjiro Shinozuka.
TURKEY Volkan Isik. **URUGUAY** Gustavo Trelles.

option, with the races achieving further tension by fleeting glances of your opponent. Due to each car being on a different part of the track, it's never certain who is actually leading, thus creating a quandary as to whether to keep it tight or simply go all out for victory, thereby increasing the chances of a spillage. It's an option that works well, and

victory can often be secured by mere hundredths of a second.

In total, there are four different ways of playing the game, and they encompass the standard rally locations of England, Indonesia, Sweden, Italy and the USA. With the graphical advances of recent years, there is a tendency for all rally games to look alike. That is, they all look

like the real thing, and *Rally Masters* is no exception. In fact, the untrained eye would struggle to tell the latest titles apart. Probably the best looking of the current crop is the photo-realistic *Rally Championship*, although *Rally Masters* is not much

achievement admittedly, and one likely to impress hardcore rally aficionados. However, whether this extraordinary attention to detail makes *Rally Championship* a better game is debatable, and there is a lot to be said for making things up. Whereas it might be

vandalism. As for under-the-bonnet shenanigans, car bores may be disappointed to learn that there is little in the way of sprocket adjustments, the game offering only rudimentary tweaks to suspension and gears. But as far as we're concerned, car bores can poke it. If they're interested in that kind of thing, they should consider a career as a Kwik-Fit fitter.

Above all, *Rally Masters* is a game, and it's an absolute belter. It has a great driving model, excellent sound effects, tons of tracks, and more options than you can shake a monkey-wrench at. Like the man said, it really is rather good. **PCZ**

“Rally Masters is definitely more of a game than a simulation, and is all the better for it, offering a lot more variety”

different. It might lack the graphical polish of *Rally Championship*, but it is certainly no slouch, with no noticeable pop-up, the distant scenery instead looming up in a fairly convincing fashion.

Where it does differ is in the fact that the courses are by and large fictional, merely taking elements of the environment and fashioning them into something approaching a rally track. This is in direct opposition to *Rally Championship*, which incorporates hundreds of miles of real track, culled from footage of some of the United Kingdom's bleakest outposts. An admirable

extremely realistic, 15 minutes of uninterrupted Welsh forest isn't necessarily the ultimate gaming experience. *Rally Masters* is more of a game than a simulation, and is all the better for it, offering a lot more variety. After all, where would you rather be – Las Vegas or Llanfairfucflongllwrh?

BRIAN DAMAGE

As for minor gripes, it's possible to get by via the time-honoured technique of bouncing off the invisible track walls at full speed, although this is tempered to an extent by a reasonably convincing damage model, which then slows the car enough to deter wanton

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Great handling • A host of tracks • Plenty of variety • Shedloads of options
- DOWNERS** Incongruous lens flare • No rain on the windscreen • 2D trees

84 A truly masterful game



11-05-50

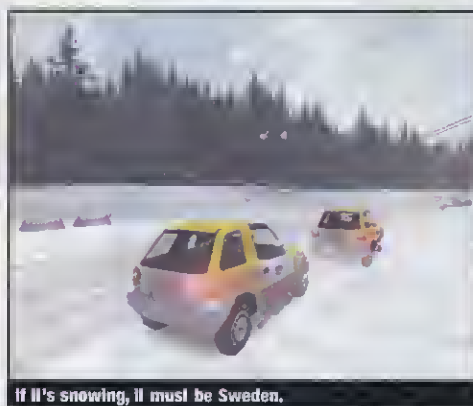
All the '80s revivalists can insert their own Skoda joke.



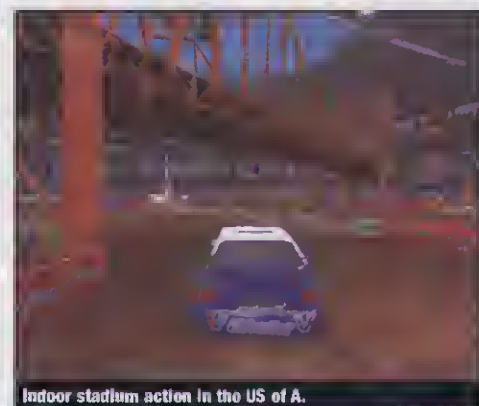
Artistic Merit: 5.9.



The inside of a buggy.



If it's snowing, it must be Sweden.



Indoor stadium action in the US of A.

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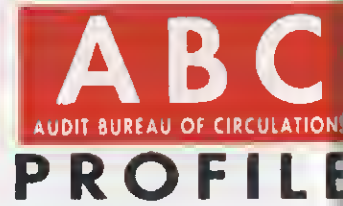
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advertisement into
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ABC PROFILE will improve
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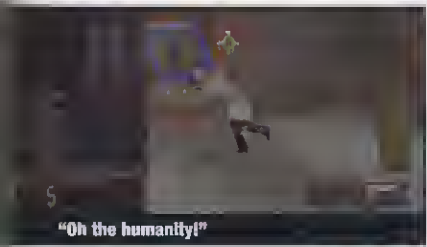
"Didn't I see you in *Carmageddon*?"



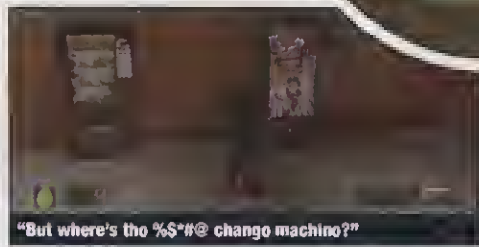
Stop, drop, and roll.



They just don't make 'em like they used to.



"Oh the humanity!"



"But where's the %\$*#@ chango machino?"



Damn, that's going to hurt in the morning.

DIE HARD TRILOGY 2

★ £34.99 • Fox Interactive • Out now

John McClane gets gunned down in cold blood, but *Scott Steinberg* swears it was a mercy killing

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct X6 or 4Mb 3dfx Glide 3 compatible 3D graphics card **WE SAY** That's passable, but to get the full effect you're advised to use a more powerful graphics board

INPERSPECTIVE

If you want more Willis then you could check out *The Fifth Element*. A scantily-clad Milla Jovovich co-stars in Kallisto's underwhelming small screen adaptation. Need we say more? If you want to forget about the guns and just concentrate on the driving section then *Carmageddon 2* is still fun. Want guns? Check out *Soldier Of Fortune* on page 74.

DHT2

The Fifth Element

Carmageddon 2

Soldier Of Fortune

We're not overly fond of PlayStation ports here at **PC ZONE**, and naturally sequels of

PlayStation ports slip even further down our must-have list. Add in a healthy dose of Bruce Willis and even those of you with intestinal fortitude might find the title hard to digest. And if you find that appalling, try swallowing the concept that the only surprise you'll find in this box is that the game is not only flawed, it's flawed three times over.

TRIPLE THREAT

Starting out, we find John McClane, chief ass-whooper, heavily armed and dangerous on the streets of Las Vegas. He's popped in for a party at a local

prison, but something's gone awry and a gang of international terrorists are pestering the local populace. McClane is the man in the wrong place at the wrong time (as you are if you've bought this game) and it's your job to lead him through a selection of activities: a driving sequence, third-person action-adventure, and a *Virtua Cop*-style-shooting affair. Supposedly a testosterone-fuelled orgy of destruction that

“There's a spot of fun to be had by ramming your car headfirst into unsuspecting cars and passers-by during vehicular episodes”

will appeal to self-respecting males of all shapes and preferences, play this and it's going to be you that's begging for a bullet, oh, about 30 minutes in.

SHOOT ME, PLEASE

For starters, even with a gamepad, the controls are rubbish. Trying to make McClane's car or body turn, let alone move the cross hair/laser sight fast enough to shoot the gun-wielding geezers that pop up, is a constant

chore. Piss poor camera angles and your ability to see through walls (which become translucent from some viewpoints), don't improve matters either. Forget about a learning curve as well, because all you have to do to get ahead is memorise where enemies are going to pop up. And how about a cheer for the age-old console design trick that renders the player unable to save between levels?

But, complaints aside, the game's not all crap. There's a spot of fun to be had by ramming your car headfirst into unsuspecting cars and passers-by during vehicular episodes, even if it has been done to death before... *Carmageddon*, anyone? Touting about a huge arsenal of weaponry and ripping homicidal thugs in half can be fun too. Caught in the line of fire, random objects – even cacti – constantly blow up and the blood flows by the gallon, making

it possible to briefly satisfy any murderous cravings you may possess. Ultimately though, high-resolution visual renditions of wanton violence, death, and destruction alone aren't enough to carry an entire title (unless it's from Rage Software, of course).

SUICIDE MISSION

So *DHT2* is a brief adrenaline rush at best. The only other good thing we can say is that it installs next to nothing on the hard drive. Die hard as it may, it won't be long before this one will be begging to be put out of its misery. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

- ⬇️ **UPPERS** Fast, hard-hitting action • Sumptuous graphics • Everything blows up
- ⬇️ **DOWNERS** Fun factor plummets rapidly • Repetitive play • Frustrating controls • Predictable AI patterns • Terrible voice acting

42 Three flavours of mindless, repetitive gaming

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER



★ £34.99 • Activision • Out now

At last the first *Star Wars* RTS is here. But is the Force truly with it? Mark Hill dons his furry pun hat and finds out

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 8Mb 3D card **WE SAY** A P350 with as much RAM as you can conjure up

This is what everyone's been waiting for. Ever since the world got excited by *Command & Conquer's* strategic deployment of units, people have dreamt about controlling legions of stormtroopers and sending out speeder bikes on scouting missions instead of NOD soldiers or wizards and goblins. And now, at last LucasArts has gone and done it – with the first *Star Wars* RTS. Or, as they would put it,

real-time ground combat. But we'll get to that in a moment. The most important thing you need to know right now, if you didn't know already, is that the game is based on the original trilogy and spans events for all three films. Oh, and it's also rather good.

NICE EWOK IF YOU CAN GET IT It's difficult to approach *Force Commander* (or any other *Star Wars* title for that matter) without regressing into an impressionable

child, ready to worship whatever comes up on screen as soon as the music starts sending that familiar thrill up your spine and you begin to read the great big yellow text scrolling up into the star-dotted infinity. Like *X-Wing Alliance*, *FC* focuses on the fate of a couple of individuals picked out from the masses you only get to see fleetingly in the films. In this case, two brothers enrolled in the Imperial army, working their way up the stormtrooper ranks.

As one of the brothers, you are given an enormous amount of responsibility in the Empire's effort to wipe out the rebels once and for all, after you have proven your worth as an able commander in the training levels. You're thrown right into a familiar setting and given the task of finding a crashed escape pod somewhere in the Tatooine desert, which apparently contains a couple of droids holding valuable information. Once you've found it (you'll never guess this bit), you discover the pod is empty and your objective changes to tracking down a gigantic Jawa Sandcrawler that might have taken them, killing Sand People who are riding banthas along the way.

EWOKS IN BEAUTY LIKE THE NIGHT

And here lies the true beauty of the game, as you play through essential events in the films through the eyes of the dark side and discover what the Empire was up to while George Lucas's script concentrated on a small group of rebels. It does mean you have to perform a few tedious and thankless tasks, such as setting up a series of communication relay points across a map while constantly getting attacked by Alliance forces, or taking over some coal mines.

In a controversial move, LucasArts has dispensed with resource management (normally

an essential part of any RTS) and introduced command points instead. The move away from resource management is one all strategy games released in the near future seem to be taking, and very welcome it is too. Instead of setting up a base and waiting for your collectors to harvest some radioactive weed or dig up ore in the rocks, you are awarded Command points for destroying enemy units and completing primary and secondary objectives. The game does cheat a bit by having supply bunkers scattered around the map, which bring a steady flow of points when you take them over, in the same way that mana zones work in *TA Kingdoms* or *Magic & Mayhem*. But the principle remains solid enough, especially when you consider how you order

“Thanks to the multiplayer game, it won't be long before you start recreating your favourite *Star Wars* scenes”

units onto the battlefield. Instead of pumping soldiers out of barracks and building tanks in special buildings, *Force Commander* assumes there are massive Star Destroyers orbiting the planet where units get shuffled from. We suppose the reason they can't just send you everything they've got is because they are supplying the war effort in other sectors at the same time.

TAKE EWOK ON THE WILD SIDE

“But what about the rebels? When do we get to play them?” I can hear you asking. Well, without giving too much of the plot away, we can say that the brother you play has a change of mind

IMPERSPECTIVE

If you want the next big thing in RTS, you should take a look at *Shogun*. *Force Commander* doesn't really break any new ground.

Star Wars Supremacy

Wargames

Warzone 2100

C&C: Tiberian Sun

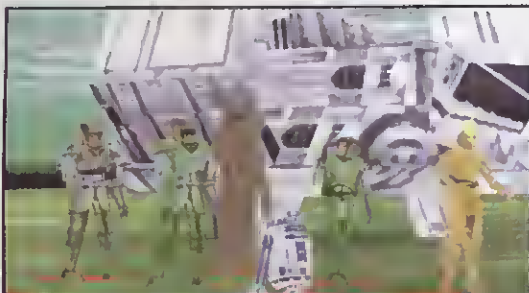
Force Commander

half-way through the game and defects to the Alliance. The decision to make you play most of the game from the Imperial side was taken for a very good reason: their units are cooler. The moment an AT-AT stomps onto the dusty surface of the planet you're won over, hopping around your mouse like an overactive kid. When you find out you can group them up with TIE-Fighters and TIE-Bombers as well, you're likely to giggle to death with pure delight. To make sure you don't lose that feeling when you go over to the Rebels (many of whose units have had to be designed for the game since there aren't that many in the films), there are special infiltrator soldiers, who can take over enemy vehicles and use them. The only thing that comes close to stomping Ewoks with an Imperial Walker is taking one over and blowing up AT-STs with it. Thanks to the multiplayer game (there is also a skirmish mode), it won't be long before you start recreating your favourite scenes with your friends. Many of them are built into the campaign, and you're bound to play the Battle of Hoth a few times or keep returning to Endor's Forest Moon recruiting ewoks (with their rock-dropping gliders and tree traps) to destroy the Death Star's shield. Especially when you consider that

YOU'LL NEVER EWOK ALONE

Never miss your old toys again!

It, like me, your soul has been consumed by regret that you got rid of all those fantastic plastic figures and vehicle models once you turned 14 (and started doing 'cool' things, like wearing labels, drinking cider and overdosing on Clearasil), *Force Commander* is heaven sent. Controlling Han Solo, Chewbacca, Darth Vader et al is what you've been craving to do for the past decade, and now you can. In the game, each character has a special ability you need to use to make it through a mission (eg Chewie can take over other vehicles), so they serve more than window-dressing purposes. Shame that the graphics aren't up to the job though. These are like the new figures you can buy now – they are ugly, cheap and just don't feel quite right.



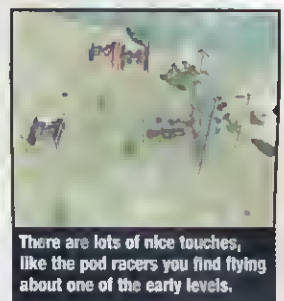
Luke, Leia, Han Solo, Chewie and the droids. Or some cubist version of them anyway.



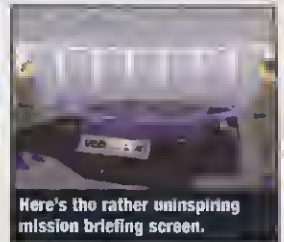
Capture Imperial Walkers and turn them on the imperial forces.



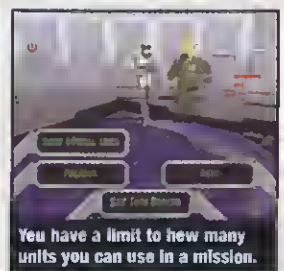
Some Speeder Bikes are about to get crushed somewhere in Endor.



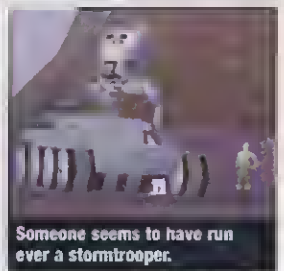
There are lots of nice touches, like the pod racers you find flying about one of the early levels.



Here's the rather uninspiring mission briefing screen.



You have a limit to how many units you can use in a mission.



Someone seems to have run over a stormtrooper.

you can use actual characters from the trilogy (see box out).

EWOK IN PROGRESS

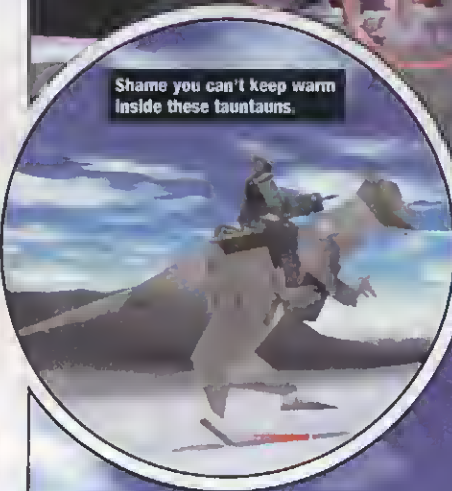
In spite of all this, *Force Commander* is far from perfect. The main gripe is with the graphics, the 3D view and, by default, the actual *feel* of the game. The terrains lack any detail and the units look like badly drawn entries in a *Star Wars* art competition, especially if you zoom right in. Stormtroopers have big, boxy legs and vehicles are angular monstrosities. The big frame boxes drawn around the selected units look like wireframe placeholders. Working out where you can set down units and turrets once you've spent your command points on them can be a nightmare, as you will sometimes spend whole minutes searching for that elusive green shadow. The 3D camera makes things even more confusing and it's almost impossible to get a good view of the action all of the time. *Warzone 2100* used the 3D rotation to much better effect and the whole thing lacks the slick, professional quality you would expect from a first class title. Even the mission briefings pale to those in *TIE-Fighter* or *X-Wing Alliance*.

If you're a *Star Wars* fan (and how many of us are not?), you'll be able to put up with all these problems and have plenty of fun, but the realisation will slowly gnaw its way to the front of your brain that this could have been so, so much better. [C]



Shame you can't keep warm inside these tauntauns.

You can rename units, just like you did with your toys.



PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS It's *Star Wars* • Fantastic units • Command point system works
- DOWNERS Awful graphics • 3D camera could be better

81 The Force is flawed, but it's still tremendous fun



Just a minute? What's that dewback doing in the Battle of Hoth?

DEMOLITION RACER

£29.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A conservative estimate, but it's hardly worth upgrading for

When Infogrames are blessed with driving games of the calibre of *Rally Masters*, it's a mystery as to why they bother with such lower division fare as this. Developed by Pitbull Syndicate, the team behind the non-renowned *Test Drive 4 & 5*, *Demolition Racer* wouldn't have looked out of place five years ago. The graphics are little better than a work-in-progress sketch, and it's the kind of thing that could easily be passed off as Shareware.

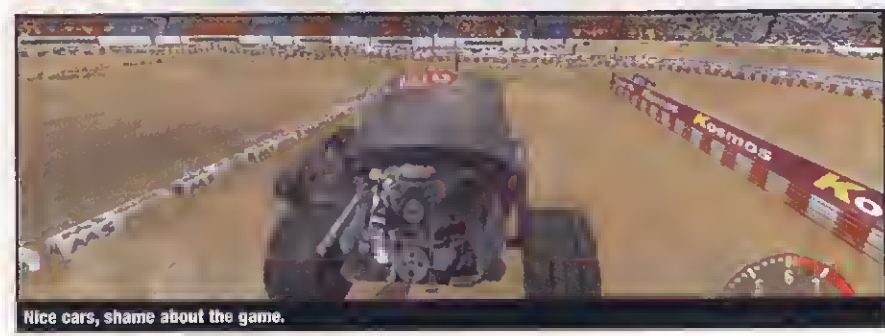
As the name might suggest, the wanton destruction of auto vehicles is the order of the day, and it occurs in a strictly rudimentary fashion, with a basic driving model and some simplistic effects. Clearly aimed at American non-gamers, it could tenuously be described as the *Deer Hunter* of racing games, in that it takes a redneck pastime and replicates it in a moron-proof fashion.

Essentially, *Demolition Racer* offers a similar experience to the ancient *Destruction Derby*, but unfortunately is inferior in almost every aspect. The various modes offer minor variations on the theme of damaging cars, and include Demolition Racing, where the goal is to stay alive and inflict as much damage as possible on your opponents, the self-explanatory Last Man Standing, some straightforward Stock Car Racing, and a Chicken mode against oncoming traffic. There's even a Suicide mode in which the first player to destroy his car wins. It might sound great on paper, but in reality *Demolition Racer* is a very weak game. For rednecks only.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

25%



BEETLE CRAZY CUP

£34.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P11 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Add a 3D accelerator if you really want to play it

Driving games, eh? The PC is far more powerful than any console, yet while we get by on second-hand remakes, the plastic boxes deliver the goods in just about every area. On the PlayStation you've got the superb *Gran Turismo* series and Nintendo users can boast about the delights of multiplayer *Mario Kart*. There are some excellent simulation titles on the PC, and a couple of decent arcade games (*Midtown Madness*, for example) but *Beetle Crazy Cup* is far more representative of the dross.

It's not bad, but it doesn't do anything new. The only twist is that you get to drive the legendary VW Beetle, in all of its guises from road-hugger to beach buggy. There are loads of tracks to negotiate and a variety of racing modes (track, beach, stadium, monster and jumps), but after a couple of hours you'll have tried them all and come away unsatisfied.

There's not one thing that we could cite for the shortcomings of this game. The cars handle differently, but none of them give you a sense of pinpoint control. The tracks are often too harsh and if you dare to come off the road surface the gravel acts as a treacle pit, holding you back until the leaders have shot off into the distance. The brakes are too heavy, the handbrake too light, and the steering just about right. And that's it: average, average, average.

We've scored it above average because of the variety of games and vehicles, but it would have scored higher if it had come with an Internet option. As it is you can play in split-screen mode or across a network if you're lucky enough to live in a two-PC household or work in an office with a boss that's never around. In the year 2000, it's just not enough.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

60%

MAJESTY

★ £34.99 • Hasbro • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P233 and a 4Mb graphics card

For those of you who see yourselves as budding megalomaniacs, Hasbro's new god game, *Majesty*, is an attempt to fulfill your hankering for unopposed power. Set in the land of Arдания, you are the king of a city, which you must build up, make prosperous and defend.

At first, *Majesty* promises to be a very addictive game. The accessible interface makes building your town easy, and watching heroes go off on quests is great fun. A nice touch is that heroes won't fight to the bitter end, but will run away if they think they can't handle a situation. They can gain experience and go up in levels. If need be, you can cast spells to aid your citizens, but only at a price. Magic aside, you have no direct control over characters, but you can put bounties on buildings and evil creatures you want to eradicate, and hope your heroes take up the challenge.

It's hard to know whether to take *Majesty* seriously or not. The narrator is unashamedly trying to sound like Sean Connery, with each sentence containing more 'sh' sounds than a Ronan Keating vocal track, but the game does raise the odd smile. Early levels are pitifully easy, but later on the challenge is far greater. You'll find yourself manically trying to recruit more warriors as your town is slowly overrun by evil creatures. It's a real shame you can't build any walls to keep your enemies out, but not being able to tortify your city does somewhat add to the overall challenge. You *can*, however, tweak the difficulty levels somewhat with an editor. Resource management is easy to handle, but again slightly basic.

Majesty is a lot of fun, but is unlikely to take over your life. A sound multiplayer option (LAN or Internet) improves longevity, but it's still more likely you'll play *Majesty* when you have an hour or two spare, or when you're taking a break from other, more involving games. It's instantly accessible, easy to play, but unfortunately a tad limited in the long run.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

50%



You must make sure that your town prospers financially, so that you can afford to hire warriors to defend it.



Your city will be attacked by various evil creatures.



Run away!!!

ALIEN NATIONS

★ £24.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233MMX Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** That's about right, but 64Mb RAM keeps things moving more smoothly

Alien Nations has one of the most surreal intros we've ever seen here at the PC ZONE office. Stalks flying through space, a jumbled story about evolution, and space ships with saucy women figures on them. Even Salvador Dali would have been left wondering what the hell this game was supposed to be about. So what does it offer in terms of gameplay?

The answer to this is very simple. Nothing new and nothing particularly impressive. Three different nations live on the same planet, and must expand their territory and numbers in order to become the dominant species. There are three races to choose from. The farming Pimmons, the nature-loving Amazons and the insect race of Sajkiks, who prioritise hoarding food and wiping out the other two nations above all else. These varying racial characteristics present different challenges when playing with each one.

You must take care of your nation's wellbeing, from food supplies to the military. However, this is made occasionally difficult by a slightly unclear interface, a bugged or just highly confusing side bar map and the fact that sometimes you can't find your men when you need them because they're hidden behind objects. The graphics are quite childish, the music cumbersome and the manual is substandard with sentences such as: "Hunters and policemen can fight as well, but they are as effective as a trained soldier". Reading it is almost as confusing as watching the intro.

To the game's credit, there is a sound research element, multiplayer LAN and internet options, as well as plenty of depth of gameplay with regards to building up a prosperous nation. Unfortunately, the little niggles, general confusion and poor visuals (which also have the odd glitch) make it nothing more than a below average RTS game.

Martin Korda

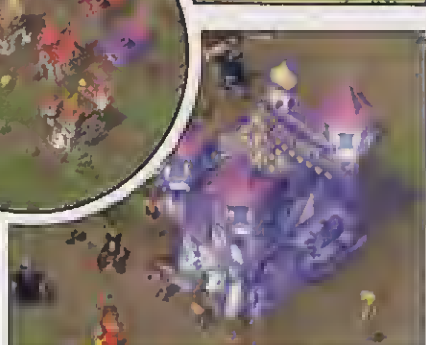
PCZVERDICT

40%

There are quite a few bugs in this game.



The Pimmons prefer farming to fighting.



Oh no, we're being invaded by a tribe of busty blonde females. Quick everyone, surrender.

DEMISE: RISE OF THE KU'TAN

£34.99 • IPC Software • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** It supports 3D acceleration, but still looks like an Amiga game

PCZONE PANTS

The origins of *Demise* are apparently buried deep inside the dark room of an American RPG fan who decided to program his own games. If only it had stayed there, among the packets of Doritos and soiled underwear, instead of crawling out into the light of day. Early attempts were available as free downloads from the Internet, and it's hard to see why someone would want to spend money on it. If it's an old-style RPG you're after, then find yourself an emulator on the Web and play *Eye Of The Beholder*, or even *The Bard's Tale*. And don't be tricked by the manual and character generation screen. We were hopping from one foot to another like an excited Kobold

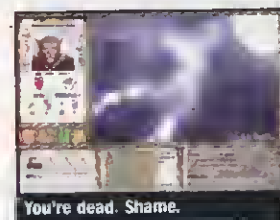
when we saw the sheer wealth and depth of classes and options (fancy being an elf sorcerer, a human ninja, a dwarf paladin?), but as soon as you start playing you'll choke on your pint of real ale at the horror of it all.

The fact that there is 3D acceleration support is risible, as are the graphical options to enable or disable detail and effects. You can excuse bad graphics, but you can't excuse a bad interface, and this is one of the worst we've seen in our lives. The combat system is the very height of sophistication, especially when you discover that pressing A(ttack) makes even the mightiest monsters keel over like extras in a '50s *Godzilla* movie. As for the multiplayer option, please stop, you're hurting our sides. The Ku'Tan might be rising, but *Demise* is stuck down a deep, deep hole full of s**t.

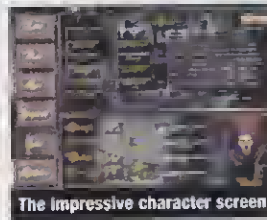
Mark Hill



It must be amateur night down at the Bearded Ogre RPG pub.



You're dead. Shame.



The impressive character screen.

PCZVERDICT

11%

HAZARD

£29.99 • Virgin Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Having a virus on your PC is more fun, if not more hazardous

PCZONE PANTS

There seems to be a growing trend among RPG developers to try to disarm critics with their honesty. *Hazard* should be subtitled 'Do not touch', be locked away behind a 5in thick metal door and only be handled by highly trained people. Luckily for you, the PC ZONE team of professionals was prepared to risk life, limb and sanity to review it in order to save you from a fate worse than death.

Hazard tries to fall somewhere in between *Diablo* and *Final Fantasy*, but manages to recreate the most shallow

Mega Drive Japanese RPG you could possibly imagine. Whether a dyslexic child really wrote the dialogue and whether the game was meant to be a shareware release, we'll never know, but that's what it feels like. The word 'amateur' doesn't even begin to describe it and, when a laughable monster warns you two seconds into the game: "That's it I warned you, now DIE!!!", you know it's all gone horribly wrong. A couple of minutes later you're bashing snakes on the head with your sword in the spirit of Springfield's Whacking Day. But not even a guest star appearance by Barry White could save this one.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

7%



Shocking behaviour.

INVICTUS: IN THE SHADOW OF OLYMPUS

£39.99 • Interplay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** About right

The ability to merge two genres into a groundbreaking game is becoming a race that many developers are entering, but none seem to complete. Enter the gates, Quicksilver, who has decided to mix two of the most intriguing and Immersive genres – RTS and RPG – and plop it all into some Greek mythology.

So, let's strip the genres of anything of value and see what's left, they must have thought. Character interaction,

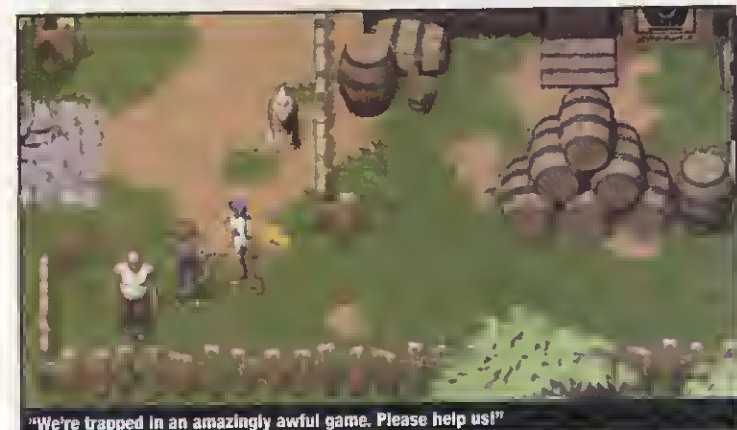
storyline, subquests, magic, epic battles and character development will have to go (RPG), and resource management, research, building and strategy are far too overrated (RTS). And AI – that's rubbish too.

Ah... that's better. Now you can have up to four heroes being followed around by 30 types of unit in clichéd missions, grab a few items and fight lots of battles that are indistinct because it's played in glorious Voxel-vision. Just what we needed. Not.

Ian Merison

PCZVERDICT

32%



"We're trapped in an amazingly awful game. Please help us!"

GIANT KILLERS

★ £29.99 • Online Sports • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P166 and more RAM will help

Football managing games for children. Now there's a novel idea. Not an idea for a novel. That would be stupid. Not to mention sphincter-tighteningly awful. And, while *Giant Killers* never pretends to be anything other than a very simplistic management game (the kind I grew up with on the Spectrum and Amstrad), it still feels like a waste of time. Going for a *Championship Manager*, no-graphics approach (it only runs in a window for goodness sake), there are enough hints at a solid game for those who can't stomach the exhaustive detail of Collyer's perennial classic. It's just that there's too much wrong with it. Despite good match commentary and a realistic messaging system, the tactics are non-existent, the players' stats are a work of fiction and the team selection is incredibly fiddly. And, for a game aimed at the young 'uns, there's nothing easy about it. Winning matches seems more down to luck than anything else and there's a curious habit among players to selfishly waste chances by going for glory. Taking away all the options we've grown used to – like being able to play foreign leagues – doesn't automatically qualify it for toddlers, it just insults them. But then that's what football is all about. You bunch of tossers.

Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT

36%



None of the mini-games are *Carnageddon*.

STEPHEN KING'S F13

★ £19.99 • Blue Byte • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** You should read a book instead

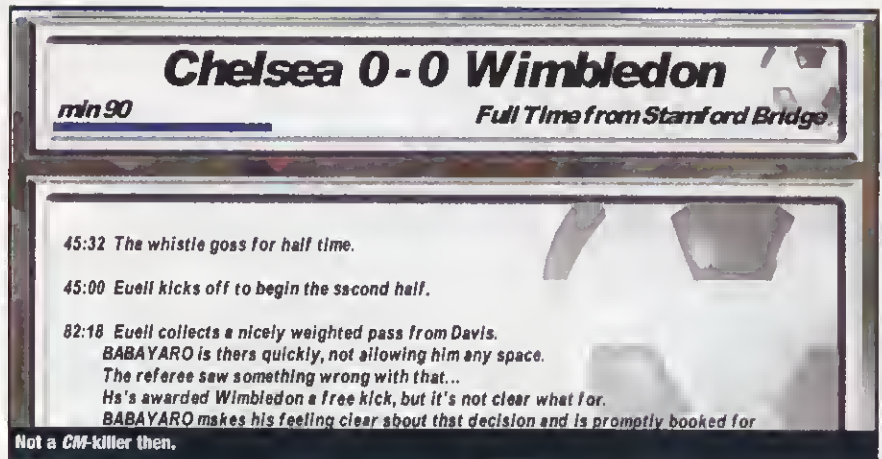
PCZONE PANTS

Once read a great Stephen King story about a writer who discovers he can make things in the real world disappear using the Delete button on his keyboard. If my memory serves me right, he uses it to get rid of his wife. If you get duped into buying this, you'll wish you had that key instead of an *F13*. While it's obvious that *F13* isn't marketed at gamers, it's unlikely to appeal even to fans of the over-producing author. A collection of screensavers, desktop wallpaper, sounds and a few games might not be the most exciting proposition, but it could have been so much better than this half-hearted cash-in (from the studio that brought us the dreadful *Star Trek: Hidden Evil*). Whacking skeletons with a spade and feeding cows to voracious piranha is about as far as the games go and while a short story that has "never been released in book form" is included, it's hard to imagine who'd want to read 80 pages on their PC screen. A nightmare.

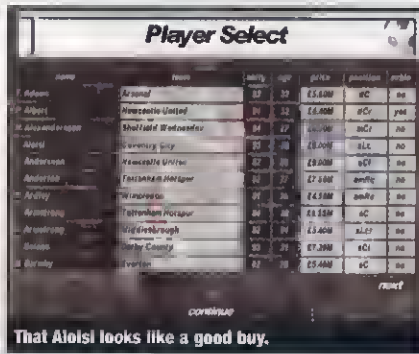
Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT

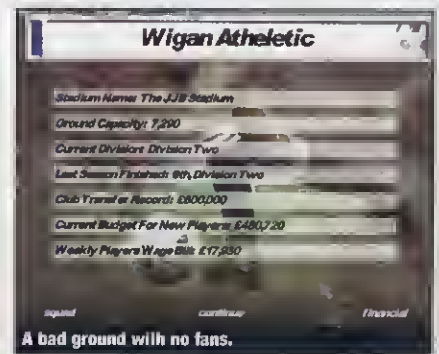
13%



Not a *CM*-killer then.



That Aloisi looks like a good buy.



A bad ground with no fans.

WILD WILD WEST: THE STEEL ASSASSIN

★ £29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** That'll do, pig

Will Smith doesn't have any luck in games. Look at *Men In Black*, a brilliant film turned into the dulllest piece of action/adventuring this side of Orion's Belt. So what chance does a turkey like *Wild Wild West* stand of making a decent translation into the digitised world of computer games? None, of course.

Continuing the story where the film left off, you go around shooting cowboys and solving puzzles, but it's about as wild as a disco night down the old folks' home. You play the Will Smith character in some levels (the prince of cool is made to wobble around like a puppet with weak knees) and Kevin Kline in

others. In the first set of missions the emphasis is on action, which just means you point your mouse at cardboard figures hiding behind trees until the target shrinks for you to shoot accurately, while the second concentrates on puzzles, which are so simple they hardly deserve their name.

Since the film flopped both artistically and at the box-office and its street-cred is at gutter level, making a game aimed at impressionable children was a good idea. Shame that it was the last one developer South Peak Interactive had. We're sick to death at the way publishers keeps spilling the guts of adventure games on to the market as if they needn't make the effort any more. Someone had better revive the genre or they might as well bury it 6ft under.

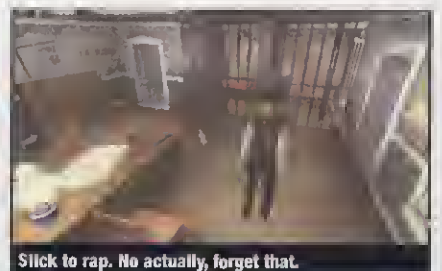
Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT

31%



A game with no balls.

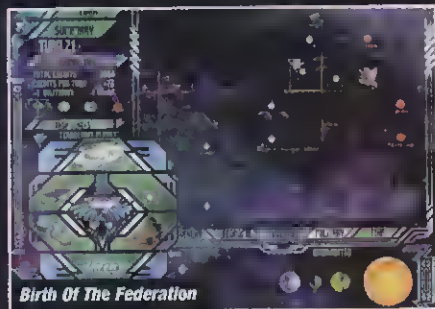


Slick to rap. No actually, forget that.

PCZ SUPERTEST TURN STRATEGY



Alpha Centauri



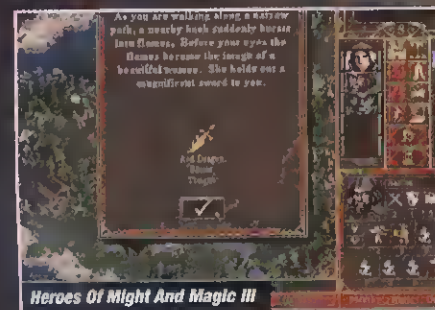
Birth Of The Federation



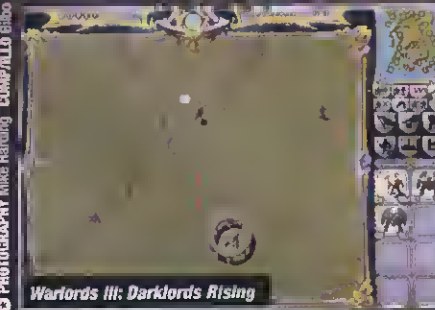
Civilization: Call To Power



Civilization: Test Of Time

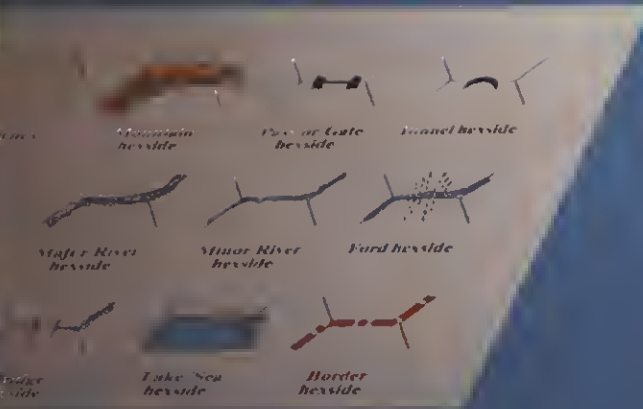


Heroes Of Might And Magic III



Warlords III: Darklords Rising

"No, don't go! Turn-based strategy games are good – honest!" cry the PC ZONE team as they assemble to discuss the best examples of this generally vilified gaming genre. Paul Mallinson carves out the hexes



Ⓛ to R: Ⓢ Chris Anderson's love for X-COM has been well documented in PC ZONE in the past. Ⓢ New boy Martin Korda was forced to play all of the games in this Supertest because we needed someone present to make the tea. Ⓢ Paul Mallinson reviewed Warlords III and still thinks it's life-sapping. Ⓢ Andrew Wright reviewed Alpha Centauri, Call To Power and Test Of Time, so really knows his Civ games. Ⓢ Danlol Emery is a WWII strategy expert and moaned because we wouldn't shortlist Panzer General 3D. Ⓢ Big-time Trekkie Mark Hill reviewed Birth Of The Federation and liked it a lot.

PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Harding COMPYLO Bibo

BASED CYGAMES



The turn-based strategy genre may have something of a bad reputation, from the point of view that many of its devoted followers are seen as hardcore gaming crusties and that the games themselves often appear relatively impenetrable, but in truth it is a massively rewarding and interesting sub-genre that is more than capable of producing classics and will continue to do so well into the future...

Turn-based games usually fall into a number of different sub-categories, but for the purpose of this Supertest we're going to be looking at fantasy/sci-fi strategy games – choosing to exclude the numerous war-based hex games available to buy at the moment (they are another Supertest entirely). The six games shortlisted this month are, in our opinion, the best examples of turn-based strategy available to buy for your PC at the moment, and could even be split into two further camps: *Civilization*-type strategy games, and fantasy war games.

PC ZONE's gaming experts once again congregate to discuss the subject, and to choose which game, out of all of them, would be best to spend your hard-earned cash on.

ALPHA CENTAURI

Mallo: *Alpha Centauri* is bloody dullsville. I thought I'd like it because I like serious sci-fi, but I found it all a bit too much. OK, so it's nicely presented and there are an overwhelming amount of options, but the game just sent me to sleep within half an hour. **Chris:** I have a theory on that – it's because it's set in the space age, rather than right at the beginning of civilisation. It's just so much more interesting to work your way up through the ages than to start out in the future. You can relate to the past because you've been there. **Dan:** Eh?! Time travel?

Everyone: (Laughs) **Chris:** You know what I mean. At different points in history you get better weapons and stuff, instead of starting in space and researching stuff that you haven't any clue about. **Dan:** Basically, with any good strategy game the first thing is, can you relate to it? **Mallo:** That's not entirely true because I love *Warlords III* – and that's fantasy. **Andrew:** Yeah, but you still know what archers are good at and you know what swords, ballistas and catapults can do. **Mallo:** But not Imps and Trolls... **Andrew:** But you don't relate to the actual people do you? You relate to the weapons in the game. In *Alpha Centauri* you got things like Ion Bolt Atomizers and things – and you don't know what the hell they are. **Mallo:** Vehicle research is quite cool in *Alpha Centauri* – I did like that. **Dan:** *Alpha Centauri* would make a lovely add-on for *Civ* – in that if you finish it you carry on seamlessly, but it doesn't though. *Alpha Centauri* is a great idea... **Mark:** It's too ambitious really. When I first looked at *Alpha Centauri* I got really excited about all these different factions. It looked like being one of the most involving games ever... but I could never get into it. **Andrew:** Did you get into *Test Of Time* and *Call To Power*? **Mark:** Yeah – I found them much easier to play than this. **Martin:** I didn't find *Alpha Centauri's* Interface as accessible as *Call To Power*, but I did like the fact that there were lots of different

options and that the diplomacy element was really good. One of the worst things about it was movement. You'd end a move, and if you still had your finger on the button another unit would move accidentally. Suddenly you're moving your next unit in a completely different position to where you want it to move... **Mallo:** And you can't undo your last move like you can in some of these games... **Martin:** Yeah, you end up moving

Chris: These games aren't about combat. I think *Alpha Centauri* would have worked much better as a real-time game – a lot more exciting. Messing around with all that detail is fine if you get to see it in action, but if you don't, I don't think futuristic games work in that sense. I would say the same thing about *Birth Of The Federation*. **Mark:** Well you're wrong! **Dan:** Look at the original *X-COM*, which was a turn-based game –



“It's more interesting stepping through history than wading through scientific fantasy”

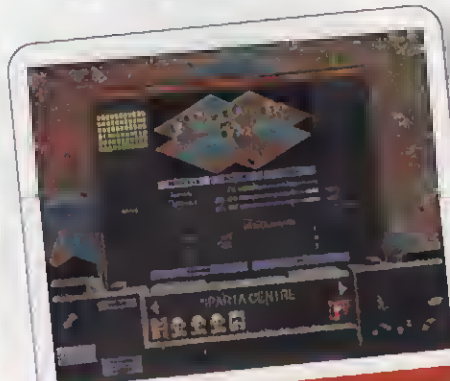
ANDREW CHANGES HIS MIND ABOUT ALPHA CENTAURI

units into dead ends and have to go back... **Andrew:** It is a slightly clunky movement interface I must admit. **Dan:** It's also quite draining on system resources. Unless you've got a high-end machine, the whole thing grinds to a halt after a short while. **Martin:** As for the combat – it just says stuff like: “Your vehicle has performed admirably and has now gained ‘hardened’ status.” **Andrew:** That's the same for most of these games though. **Daniel:** You don't get pitched baffles. **Andrew:** Right. In some games, like *Warlords*, you have a bit more love for some of your units. **Mallo:** The heroes? **Andrew:** Yeah, you're with them a lot and they improve. **Mallo:** And you take them with you from one scenario to the next. **Andrew:** That's right. You don't really get that with *Civ* games.

not on a global scale but on a smaller scale – that recipe of how to do a turn-based strategy game well. **Mallo:** *Abomination's* similar as well. **Dan:** But *X-COM* was a lot simpler than *Alpha Centauri* – there was no diplomacy, it was much more: research tree; go up there; kill stuff; survive. There is too much in this game. **Mark:** As Andrew said about *Warlords* earlier, with *X-COM* you carried these individual characters all the way through the game. **Dan:** You cried when they died. **Mallo:** No, you go back to the previous saved game. **Everyone:** (Laughs) **Chris:** I never did that! **Andrew:** I used to prefer *Alpha Centauri*, but I prefer *Call To Power* now. It's more satisfying to start as a stone-aged man and build up. It's more interesting stepping through history than wading through scientific fantasy.

BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

Mark: You have to approach this game from the right angle. It's not a *Civilization* game, or a combat game – it's an exploration game. If you're a *Star Trek* fan, there's just so much in it. **Mallo:** I would imagine the online encyclopaedias in themselves are enough for most *Star Trek* fans. **Mark:** So much happens when you play it. It's *Next Generation* – not original *Star Trek*... **Mallo:** Which is a pity. **Dan:** It's crap – for starters *Bones* isn't in it. **Mallo:** Out of all the games here it's probably the best looking. **Chris:** The thing that disappointed me was that you've got all these things you can build that you can never see. You can't zoom down into your colonies and see all these buildings you've made and stuff. I can't really identify with making all these things happen and not being able to see them. **Mallo:** I couldn't identify with those silly characters with the big white hair! *Birth Of The Federation* reminded me of those ancient ZX Spectrum games that were based on *Star Trek* – you know, with the ten by ten grid? **Mark:** Yeah, yeah, yeah... **Mallo:** This game is a post-'90s version of them. **Mark:** *BOTF* is a macro strategy game. It doesn't go into detail – the combat doesn't work that well. **Dan:** It's a very good-looking game, but if you go beneath the surface and cut away the eye candy, *BOTF* is quite a shallow game. If you're a Trekkie – you'll love it. If not, you probably won't find much by way of longevity. **Mallo:** This reminded me a little bit of *Wing Commander Armada* – remember that? **Martin:** *BOTF* is very well set up and it's easy to become immersed



ALPHA CENTAURI
Civilization creator Sid Meier returns to form with *Alpha Centauri*, which mixes tried-and-tested game mechanics with seriously heavyweight sci-fi – the end result being hugely complex and involving, or hugely boring, depending on how you look at it. Our advice is to try out one of the other *Civ* games first.

SCORE	74%, PCZ #92
DEVELOPER	Firaxis
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
PRICE	£34.99



All the factions make Alpha Centauri very interesting.



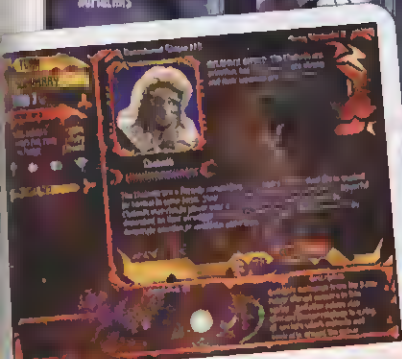
There are absolutely loads of options.



BOTF is an engrossing *Trek* game.



All the ships are in there, even if the battles are nothing spectacular.



BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

If you're into *Star Trek* (The *Next Generation* in this case), and you like your strategy games, then *Birth Of The Federation* is going to appeal to you big time. And don't be put off if you're not a big *Trekkie* because it's a bloody good game in its own right. OK? Of course, if you are, you'll absolutely love it.

SCORE	89%, PCZ #78
DEVELOPER	MicroProse
PUBLISHER	Hasbro
PRICE	£34.99

to do that. The game forces you to try and use diplomacy over combat, which is probably because the combat looks so shit!

Mallo: I found the combat confusing. I'd lose my fleet and end up looking at deep space for half an hour... There isn't even a tutorial in the game!

Dan: It's overly simple though.

Chris: The combat's too simple.

Mallo: The combat's pathetic.

Dan: It's that connection thing you mentioned earlier.

Mallo: I can't relate to races called the Chai-noth, and the Bandi - I mean, what on earth...?

Chris: You don't have to relate to everything, there just has to be something in there that makes you want to play it or care about it. *BOTF* could have been a lot better. Why can't you see your colonies? It can be done.

Dan: Because it's *Star Trek* and they know that Trekkies will lap it up and they don't need to put as much effort into it as a game that can't rely on a licence such as that.

Chris: Probably.

Mark: Well, you can all piss off...

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER

Dan: *Call To Power* is too short, you can complete it with your eyes shut. I don't know what they've done to it, but you find yourself going from 4000BC to zero AD in about five minutes flat.

Mallo: That's an exaggeration.

Dan: It's like - wow - hold on a bit, you've just skipped the Egyptian bit, the Roman bit.

Chris: But it goes further than most other *Civ* games.

Dan: Yeah, but it goes much too quickly. It's all over too soon.

Andrew: OK, so you've got to zero AD and you've still only got spear-chuckers and rock-throwers, the same as everybody else.

Dan: At zero AD I'd expect to have bloody cavalry and legions and baths or something, and here I am

in a mud hut with some bloke going "Durr, I can't go this way..."

Chris: You sound like you were spoilt as a child and want everything straight away.

Dan: It's bollocks - you accelerate rapidly and all of a sudden you go from rock-throwers to tanks...

That's arse! It could have been a cool game, but they messed it up.

Chris: I liked it! I really liked the graphics as well - I think it's the nicest-looking out of all the *Civ*-type games. You look at *Civ* now and you're looking into the past...

Dan: No, you should be looking at the gameplay, which should have been updated and bettered, and hasn't been done. *Call To Power* didn't make sense in places - it didn't follow logical paths.

Mallo: Andrew, you reviewed all three *Civ* games in this Supertest



in the politics between the five available races. It's quite interesting how you can tailor different strategies to different races.

Mark: The interface is really confusing for the first hour or two, but after that you get used to it and it's really easy flicking from screen to screen quickly.

Dan: But it relies far too heavily on the *Star Trek* licence than on gameplay.

Mark: I can't really judge it from a purely strategy-gaming point

"It's not a *Civilization* game, or a combat game - it's an exploration game"

MARK GOES BOLDLY WHERE NO MAN HAS EVER GONE BEFORE IN *BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION*



of view because I do like *Star Trek* and I've seen most of the episodes, and I do get excited when things happen in the game. But one of the best things about *BOTF* is that you can play it for hours and new things keep happening that you don't expect.

Dan: Like the bit when you capture a spy - you can't tell your diplomats to ask the other races what the hell they're doing!

Mark: Strategy-wise, it's a very simple game.

Chris: The whole thing's a bit stupid - the fact that you're giving people gifts all the time to make them be your friend.

Dan: Yeah.

Chris: Especially the smaller races. You should be able to just thump them and say: "It you don't behave..."

Mark: You can though! It depends on how you choose to play it.

Chris: But it's not in your interests

NEXT TURN

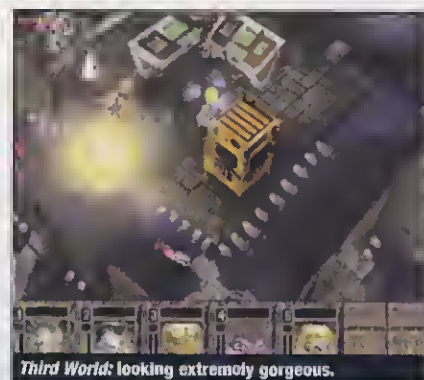
So what does the future hold for turn-based strategy games?

The last time we saw Activision's forthcoming turn-based strategy actioner *Third World* our jaws hit the floor, but then that was about two years ago and things seem to have gone very quiet since then, which does make us worry.

Sid Meier's *Dinosaurs* and *Civ III* should also deliver high-end, turn-based kicks from Firaxis, although we've yet to see with our own eyes how both games are shaping up. Also, keep a look out for *Dreamland Chronicles* (from *X-COM* creators Mythos), *Reach For The Stars* (from SSG - makers of the *Warlords* series) and *Stars! Supernova* (the sequel from Empire).



Reach For The Stars - *Warlords* goes sci-fi.



Third World: looking extremely gorgeous.



You won't get anything more involving than a Civ game.

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER

When Activision wangled 'part-ownership' of the Civilization brand name, the company at once set its sights on beating MicroProse at its own game. CTP is undoubtedly excellent, but as 'Best Civ Game Ever' it still remains debatable. If you want to play that, the best thing you can do is find yourself Civilization II out on budget.

SCORE	89%, PCZ #75
DEVELOPER	Activision
PUBLISHER	Activision
PRICE	£34.99



Things get pretty complex when you meet other cultures.

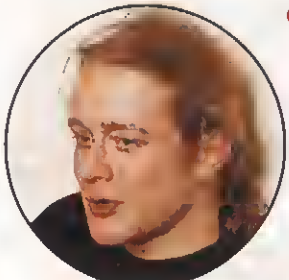
← where does Call To Power fall now?
Andrew: I think Call To Power is the better of the three Civ games.
Mallo: For any particular reason?
Andrew: Because it looks better.
Everyone: (Jeers)
Mallo: That's not a good enough reason.
Chris: I think Andrew's right – it does matter! I prefer Heroes Of Might And Magic over Warlords because it looks better. And however shallow that sounds – I don't care.
Andrew: If you're playing all three of them, in the end the one that looks nicest and behaves nicest wins.

Dan: But look at Birth Of The Federation – it looks pretty, but are you going to want to play it in six months time? I'm not!
Mark: The whole point of turn-based strategy games is that they don't have to look the business to work.
Dan: The graphics make a difference from the point of view that if you get something in 'crap-o-vision' you're not going to play it. Give me gameplay over graphics any day.
Andrew: With respect to Dan, if you play the game on the default settings and you're a bit narrow with the decisions that you make

– as you said: you do end up evolving very quickly.
Dan: At least in the original Civ you felt like you had all the cavalry and built it up and did stuff with it, but in Call To Power it really is kind of detached.
Andrew: There is an element of that – you've got to research more than in the other Civ games. You've got to tweak the luxuries, taxes and science ratios a bit more than you would in any other game like this. In Alpha Centauri

and Test Of Time you can easily get along with the usual balances that you apply to most Civ games, and evolve as your population and political complexion changes. With Call To Power you've got to make a little more judgement.
Mallo: You can automate a lot of Call To Power. Micro Management – is that what they call it?
Dan: You got that in both Test Of Time and Alpha Centauri.

stop taking the game seriously you get bored and go off and play something else instead.
Mallo: I'll tell you what got to me about Call To Power and Test Of Time – that bloody bongo music!
Chris: It's got to go.
Andrew: Bugger me, I didn't even notice the music!
Dan: That's one good thing about the Star Trek game – the music went really well with the game.
Mallo: Atmosphere-wise, Birth Of The Federation is pretty good.



“You go from rock-throwers to tanks... That's arse! It could have been a really cool game but they messed it up”
 DAN'S OPINION OF CALL TO POWER

TURN OUT

Those that were nearly included, but didn't quite make it...

Hot House Creation's *Abomination* is a superb squad-based, real-time, turn-based strategy action game, but unfortunately it is slightly let down by a few niggling idiosyncrasies, which is why we chose to relegate it to 'also-rans'. The same could also be said of *X-COM Apocalypse*, *Jagged Alliance 2*, *Master Of Orion 2* (great gameplay, but very dated graphics), *Imperium Galactica*, *Battle Isle* 'whatever-number-they're-currently-up-to', *Panzer General 3D* and *Age Of Wonders*. All these titles are worth checking out if you love turn-based strategy games. Oh, and don't forget that both *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII* have turn-based combat in them (and good turn-based combat, too), so you could give them a whirl if you've yet to experience their strangely alluring mix of Japanese strangeness, depth and complexity.



Abomination: not as bad as the title suggests.



Panzer General 3D: Dan loves it to bits.

Andrew: That's what I'm saying: if you do that you're playing the default game and might struggle to get the best out of it.
Mallo (To Dan): Is this the game you were complaining about, regarding tanks taking on spears?
Dan: Yeah.
Andrew: Yeah.
Dan: And occasionally your spear men will win! It's just like: I've seen Zulu, and if they had a Tiger tank in that film there'd be 20,000 dead Zulus...
Everyone: (Laughs)
Dan: Things like that really bug me – when you get planes shot down by a canoe...
Everyone: (Laughs)
Dan: That happens more in Call To Power than in any other Civ game. As soon as you lose your sense of realism, that's it: you stop taking the game seriously. And when you

Dan: Yeah.
Mallo: And what of Call To Power then? Thumbs up or down?
Mark: Civ II was almost a perfect title, now these three games have tried to take it in another direction and it just hasn't worked.
Dan: Civ was an almost perfect strategy game and is very hard to beat. Call To Power is a novel idea, but it just doesn't work.
Chris: I disagree. Call To Power looks great and is great.

CIVILIZATION: TEST OF TIME

Dan: The best thing about Civ is you get nukes – they just devastate everything.
Mallo: You get nukes in Call To Power, too.
Dan: All of them have got nukes in some shape or form. The only thing is: you can nuke a city and

then take it over, and sometimes there are people left. Which is bollocks! It should be: nuke – gone. Desert.

Mallo: Irradiated.

Dan: Yeah, a 25,000 year no-go area.

Mallo: These are the consequences of using that particular weapon. If you don't suffer the consequences after using it, then it's a bunch of arse.

Dan: No – you can put in loads of engineers, clean it all up, and make it like new.

Andrew: Have you noticed that you're never allowed tactical nuclear weapons like suitcase bombs and artillery-fired nukes? It's a bloody shame that.

Mallo: *Test Of Time* has a lot of options. There's a sci-fi scenario, fantasy, original *Civ II*-style, an editor – it is a great package.

Chris: My answer to all those extra scenarios is: so what? Been there, seen it, done it. I think the only people that are gonna get anything out of *Test Of Time* are those who've never played *Civ*.

Mallo: It's been a few years since I last played *Civ*, but *Test Of Time* still proves very addictive. A bit boring, but addictive.

Chris (To Mallo): Having not played *Civ* for so long, to come back and discover that nothing had really changed...

Mallo: I'd rather play *Test Of Time* than *Alpha Centauri*.

Chris: I would.

Andrew: I would too.

Mark: I'd rather go back to the original *Civ II*. If you've never played *Civ* before I'd recommend

that people go out and find it on budget.

Andrew: Yeah, it's only £9.99 on MicroProse Classics.

Dan: The thing about *Civ* is that it's got a cult – a big cult – out there...

Mallo: A bit like the Catholic Church?

Dan: Yeah, kind of, but with less condoms.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Dan: But it'll never die. For people who've never played the original

gamers won't really care about the graphics because they don't know any better.

Chris: I think the opposite. People who play real-time strategy games and 3D shooters will take one look at *Test Of Time* and think: "You can't make me play that!"

Mallo: What about a Dad who started out playing *Minesweeper*? He's not going to know any better is he? But he might be turned on by the scope of the gameplay and become addicted.



“Civ needs to evolve a bit, but the gameplay is still absolutely timeless”

CHRIS VOICES HIS VIEWS ON *TEST OF TIME*

Andrew: *Incubation* was a turn-based game with 3D graphics.

Chris: But *Incubation* isn't like the games that we're covering here – *Civ*-type games, and fantasy 'hex'-type games.

Mark: *Civ* games have stagnated.

Dan: One game you haven't mentioned yet is *Panzer General 3D*...

Everyone: (Grumbles)

Dan: Yes, yes... DK, it's a WWII game but it was the first strategy game using 3D graphics in any shape or form. You can get a proper 3D view of the map, units aren't 2D pixels – you can instantly recognise what they are. It's lovely – it's pucker.

Andrew: Yeah.

Dan: That is what – certainly from a broad point of view – a strategy game should look like.

Mallo: D'ya know what I reckon would be really good – *Myth*, turn-based. That'd be

Civs, Civ II is a really good entry point. It's still the premier strategy game as far as I'm concerned.

Chris: Is there any point introducing people to *Civ II*? I don't think people want to play a game like that anymore. I think turn-based games have got to move on or the genre's gonna die.

Dan: But *Civ II* is very easy to get your head around, so it is a very good entry point. It's like having your first fix...

Chris: These games – particularly the *Civ* games – just haven't moved on enough to keep up with technology.

Dan: These games go to higher resolutions, and that's it.

Chris: That's just pure laziness!

Mallo: But the majority of mainstream

gameplay is still

turn-based.

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brilliant, with those 3D graphics and a solid turn-based engine. Bungle should make it.

Mark: It is a bit hectic real-time. Real-time games in general are moving on. Look at *Sudden Strike* or *Shogun*, they don't really have that much to do with *C&C*, a game which – I think – has probably done more harm than good. The genre's moving on now.

Mallo: It's indicative of the society we live in today.

Mark: Society's to blame!

Mallo: The whole appeal of turn-based games is that you can take your time and have total control over everything that happens on the battlefield – cack-handedness doesn't play a part in the proceedings. Turn-based games are perfect for control freaks who've got a lot of time on their hands.

Chris: *Civ* needs to evolve a bit, but the gameplay is still absolutely timeless.

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III: THE RESTORATION OF ERATHIA

Mallo: I disagree with Chris on this – I think *Warlords III* looks better than *Heroes Of Might And Magic*. It looks like a clichéd, American fantasy game with horrible paintings by amateur role-players. *Warlords III* is no-frills and gritty. The backgrounds have been painted in an excellent Impressionist manner and look far more organic than the airbrushed beards of 3DD's game.

Dan: If you're not into 'beardy weirdy' stuff then why bother with it?

Mallo: And the combat graphics are appalling!

Chris: Compared to two inanimate sprites bashing each other over the head in *Warlords III*?

Dan: It's not about combat though – it's like chess. In chess you don't actually get your kicks from watching your pawn hit the knight over the head. It's the whole process of doing it in the first place.

Andrew: Getting into position – that's right.

Mark: But there's not much else in *Heroes Of Might And Magic* except fighting things every now and again, is there?

Martin: There's resource management in *HOMAM*.

Mallo: I prefer it without the resource management.

Martin: Then you could argue that in looking after your armies you have to resource manage them – by moving them from one place to the next...

Mallo: That's not resource management!

Dan: That's boring.

Mark: What you talking about?!

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: DK, I take back some of what I said earlier. *HOMAM* is not that bad and I did enjoy playing it, but it was DTT 'beardy weirdy'. You've got to admit...

Chris: I can't see this different level of 'beardy weirdness' in that over *Warlords III*!

Mallo: *Warlords III* is more about fighting than the noncing around on this game.

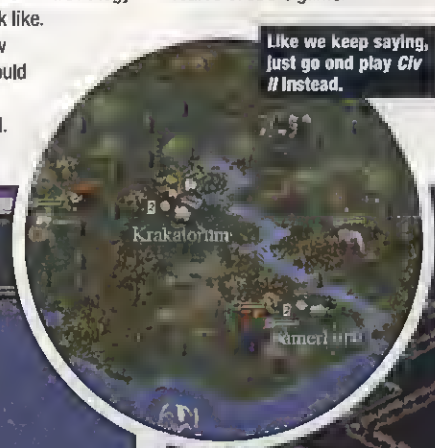
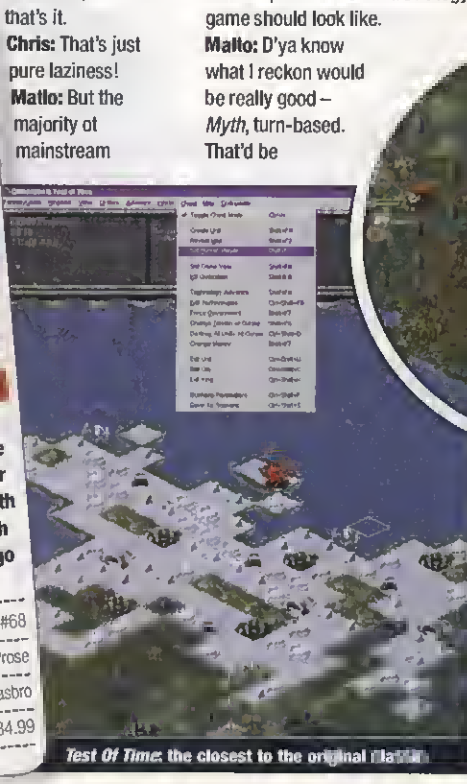
Mark: *Warlords III* looks a lot more adult than *HOMAM*.

Mallo: That's what I was trying to say.

CIVILIZATION: TEST OF TIME

Test Of Time might look a bit crusty by today's standards, but at the heart of this game lies one of the best game engines and rule systems ever devised. This compendium of *Civ* oddities is both intriguing and hugely rewarding. We await with bated breath to see where the *Civ* games will go in the future.

SCORE	84%, PCZ #68
DEVELOPER	MicroProse
PUBLISHER	Hasbro
PRICE	£34.99





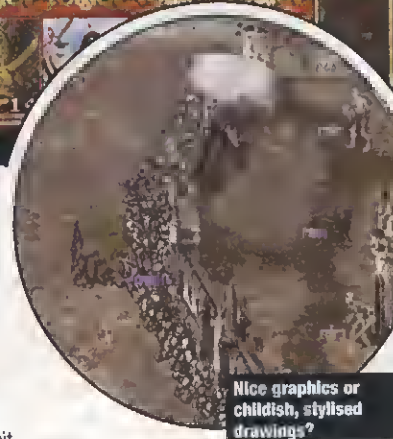
HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC III: THE RESTORATION

Another long-running series comes back for an update in *Restoration Of Erathia* – a graphically splendid swords and sorcery epic with tense combat and a modicum of resource management. Old school in many ways, but equally almost timeless.

SCORE	78%, PCZ #76
DEVELOPER	3DO
PUBLISHER	Ubi Soft
PRICE	£34.99



These heroes are just dying to show you their might, and their magic.



Nice graphics or childish, stylised drawings?

Mark: It's darker than *HOMAM*. **Mallo:** You're right. Look at the artwork – look at the paintings in *Warlords III*. In *HOMAM* you've got these horrible sub-Boris Vallejo-type backgrounds popping up everywhere. And the graphic artists have never heard of perspective... **Dan:** *Heroes* is much more about resource management. There isn't a great deal of research – spells are just about it... **Chris:** There's just so much more to do in this than there is in *Warlords III*. I like the resource management part of it. When it's your turn you should have loads

of things to think about – you have in *HOMAM III*, but not in *Warlords III*. **Mallo:** *Warlords* is more about moving armies to the right place at the right time. **Mark:** I've got to say that I really liked *Might And Magic*, but the graphics put me off. They're sort of childish fantasy. **Chris:** Earlier you said the graphics don't matter! **Everyone:** (*Uproar*) **Chris:** Graphics matter. Fact! **Mark:** (*Shouting above the noise*) You're just talking about the quality of the graphics! I'm talking about the style of the graphics. **Mallo:** And Mark said it was only a slight concern as well.

Chris: He said the graphics put him off, which is not a slight concern! **Mallo:** He loved the game, so you can't really hold it against him! **Dan:** Out of this and *Warlords* which would you rather play? **Mark:** *Warlords*. Out of all the games here *Warlords* is the one I'm going to go back to. **Chris:** Well, I'd rather play *HOMAM* over any other game in the Supertest, including the *Civ* games. **Andrew:** *Warlords* is more of a war game than *HOMAM*. **Mallo:** And there are several full campaigns in *Darklords Rising* with plenty of variety. But at the end of the day it is a 'tight' war game. **Mark:** The stories in *Warlords* are quite good as well. **Dan:** In *HOMAM* you've got to take care of your heroes – in *Warlords* you don't have concern for your units as such... **Mallo:** Yes you have! *Warlords* is the same! You invest so much time in them that to lose them is just... **Dan:** Yeah, but in *HOMAM* you've got units to look after as well. **Mallo:** Just like in *Warlords III*. Have you played the game at all? **Mark:** In *HOMAM* you get unicorns and fairies! **Everyone:** (*Laughs*) **Andrew:** But if you're into fantasy you'll like that. **Dan:** Yeah, and I bet you wear leather 'chaps' as well. **Mallo:** Ooh – hold on, I think Martin's got something to say... **Martin:** Out of all the games here *HOMAM* is the most accessible,

but it still manages to retain all the parts of a strategy game that you want. **Mallo:** Media-friendly sound bite! **Everyone:** (*Laughs*) **Martin:** OK, so the combat does look a bit dodgy, but the way you have a say in the proceedings – like keeping your archers back to fire from a distance to protect your hero – is great. **Mallo:** You do have to think about



up. BUT! I spent an unhealthy amount of time re-playing it last weekend. You're right in some ways, it is missing some things, but there is something about it

“Out of all the games here *HOMAM* is the most accessible, but it still manages to retain all the parts of a strategy game that you want”

MEDIA-FRIENDLY MARTIN SPEAKS OUT

things like that before you start winning, which is good. *HOMAM* is an excellent game, it would just look better in a different skin. **Martin:** It really sucked me in. **Dan:** We don't want to hear about that sort of thing... **Mallo:** No.

WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING
Mallo: When I wrote the *Warlords III* review I raved about it, but I was a bit worried that I might have overrated it at the time because I couldn't persuade anyone else to play it to back me

that is simple and pure and hugely addictive. **Chris:** Just like back in the olden days... **Mallo:** The graphics aren't that bad either – especially later in the game when you start getting into caves and castles and stuff. **Mark:** The thing that struck me the most was the story that drives it along. If the game was nothing more than 'here's a map – go and take over as many castles as you can', then it would get boring, but the story plays an important part in the proceedings.

TURN IT IN

Not all turn-based strategy games work

There aren't that many dodgy turn-based strategy games out there, believe it or not. *Cave Wars*, an old game from US Gold before it became Eidos, was pretty pants, but hardly worth vilifying here because it's not available to buy at the moment.



Cave Wars: It's enough to make a balanced person cave in.



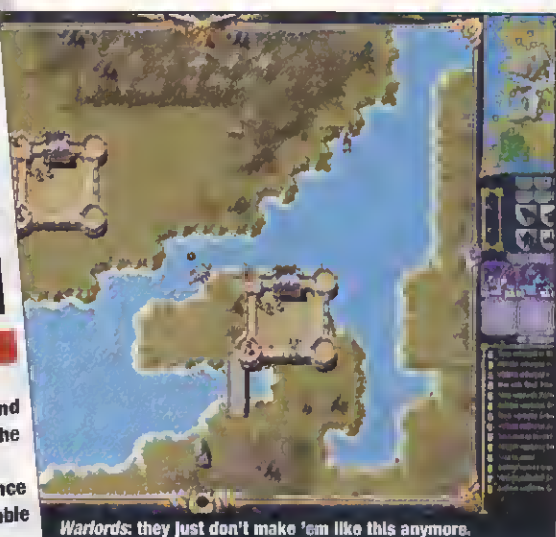
It might not be much to look at, but it plays like a dream.



WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING

This no-nonsense, hard core fantasy strategy game has won many accolades and awards, and deservedly so. OK, so it looks a bit pants, but the interface is perfect and the gameplay hugely eddective. It has stood the test of time well. Once you get involved in the stories, you won't be able to tear yourself away.

SCORE	90%, PCZ #68
DEVELOPER	Broderbund
PUBLISHER	Mattel/The Learning Company
PRICE	£34.99



Warlords: they just don't make 'em like this anymore.

Chris: I nearly died of boredom when I played it. The fact that you see the whole map when you begin is...

Mallo: Hold on - there is fog of war! You can turn it on or off. When it's used at certain points in the game, it really does add to it.

Mark: In one scenario you have

Dan: Aw, I hate being spoon-fed by games like that.

Chris: I would have liked *Warlords III* if I hadn't played *Heroes Of Might And Magic*. To me it was just a massive step backwards. What made *HOMAM* for me was all the stuff you have



“Warlords III is an excellent, no-nonsense game that deserves everyone's attention”

MALLO HAS SPOKEN

to gather allies to take on a common enemy.

Mallo: It's not a case of crush everyone in sight. In some cases you have to use diplomacy to get other factions on your side.

to think about before you even start your turn.

Mallo: *Warlords III* does start off slowly. The first five or six moves are pretty dull, but it becomes a lot more interesting when you get a full-sized force together. When

you start 'vectoring' units from castle to castle - that's when the tactics and strategy really come into play. When you're being attacked on four or five different fronts. That only really starts to come into play when you're 10 or 15 moves into it.

Martin: There's a lot more to it than simply amassing armies because individual units have advantages and weaknesses over others, and these can be applied to other characters...

Mallo: Like flying units that can carry non-flying heroes over mountains and stuff.

Mark: Fierce units increase the 'fear' factor in a particular stack as well.

the supplied editor?

Chris: You almost see the lack of complexity in the game by looking at the graphics.

Mallo: *Warlords* is more complex than you think it is. OK, there's no resource management as such, but so what?!

Martin: *Warlords III* is really great, but *HOMAM* works better as an overall package. I prefer it to *Warlords III* because there's more to do. If you're looking for a straightforward fantasy strategy war game, then *Warlords* is the right one to go for.

Andrew: I have to say that I prefer *Warlords III*...

Chris: Do you?!

Andrew: Yeah, mainly because it's more of a war game.

Dan: Gimme *Panzer General* any day.

Mallo: *Darklords Rising* has a map editor, a unit editor, and a scenario editor - it's got editors for every part of the game. It's an excellent package. Did anyone see my 'Tony Blair Versus The Spice Girls' map that I did when I wrote the original review?

Everyone: (Blank faces)

Mark: The next *Warlords* is going to be real-time.

Mallo: You're joking?! The tossers! They're hijacking one of the best turn-based games ever. They should stick to that. *Warlords III* is the only game here that's swallowed months of my life.

Mark: Calm down, they're still going to make turn-based games as well. There's the forthcoming space game, which is turn-based.

Chris: I am totally shocked that you prefer it over *HOMAM*.

Mallo: Why? *Warlords III* is an excellent game that deserves everyone's attention. ☺

AND THE WINNER IS...

None other than a true turn-based legend

Ask yourself this: do you prefer *Civ* games over other turn-based strategy games? If you don't, our panel reckons you would be better off with *Heroes Of Might And Magic III* (although there were grumbings from both Mallo and Mark about *Warlords III*), because that is currently the best buy in the turn-based fantasy war game stakes.

However, it was unanimously agreed that *Civilization* games rule the turn-based strategy roost because of their heritage and general quality, and the addictiveness of their gameplay. Out of the three *Civ* games featured in this month's Supertest, the *PC ZONE* team came to the conclusion that *Civilization: Test Of Time* was currently

the best representation of this 'high' gaming concept, beating *Call To Power* and *Alpha Centauri* to the coveted top slot. It was close though. Not between *Test Of Time* and the other *Civ* games (both *Alpha Centauri* and *Call To Power* took a verbal kicking during our discussions, remember...), but between *Test Of Time* and *Heroes Of Might And Magic III* - both of which are shining examples of where the turn-based strategy genre is today.

We here at *PC ZONE*, though, hope that future turn-based strategy games address the issue of 'gameplay over graphics' and balance it out with a few bells and whistles - it's what turn-based strategy fans deserve.



Test Of Time: looks like this *Civ* title has certainly stood up to it.

BUDGET ZONE

This month we welcome back some recent classics and confirm how badly computer games can age by taking a look at some real oldies

★ BRINGING OUT THE DEAD Mark Hill

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

★ £14.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P233 with 32Mb RAM for a decent resolution

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE Playing this sleeper hit from 1998 now, you realise how true the statement that *Hidden & Dangerous* is a 3D version of *Commandos* really is. The control system and interface could have been a lot more user friendly and less fiddly, saving thousands of lives (or the same ones over and over) in the process. The fact that each of your men has specific skills (sniper, driver, diver...) adds a lot to the tactical element, it not to the realism. You would think that to belong to such a select group of experts you should be able to drive *and* use a machine gun *and* know how to swim. The difficulty level is by now almost legendary, and you'll experience a fair share of frustration as you play each mission 87 times, saving every time you take a step and stay alive. However, every small success is made infinitely more satisfying because of it and, while you may question your sanity after a couple of hours play, you won't question the desire to play it further. Now, if only you could issue commands in pause mode...

PCZVERDICT 81%



Going back to *Commandos* after playing *H&D* makes you appreciate it even more.

WARZONE 2100

★ £14.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

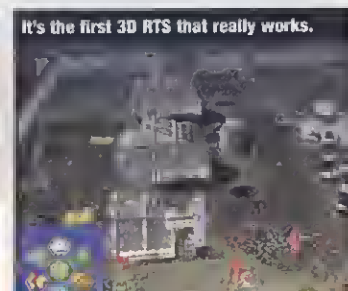
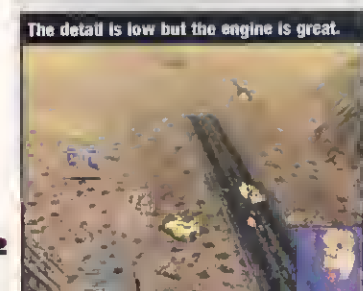
TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P233 with 32Mb RAM and a 3D card

In the overcrowded genre of real-time strategy, *Warzone 2100* was a true innovator when it first appeared about a year ago. It introduced a beautiful 3D perspective on the action that actually worked and had the gameplay to match. Sadly, it was so far ahead of its time, it failed to make a true impression on gamers who just wanted more of the same old tosh. Looking back at it now, it's easy to see why *Tiberian Sun* was such a disappointment: it was a significant step backwards from *Warzone*.

Although the story won't win any awards (a post-apocalyptic Earth inhabited by *Mad*

Max-style scavengers and hi-tech soldiers), the campaign structures have much to recommend them. For starters, they don't just rely on the tired formula of 'rush enemy base' and you don't even have to build your base from scratch at the start of each mission, since it carries on through the campaign. So, instead of spending ages arranging buildings into pretty patterns, you can concentrate on the actual game. The graphics still look the business and the AI remains one of the best examples in any RTS. If you were one of the many who ignored it first time round, don't make the same mistake again.

PCZVERDICT 78%



You'll be crashing an awful lot.



GRAND PRIX LEGENDS

★ £14.99 • Sierra • Out now

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Looks rather ropey without a 3dfx card

There are enough Grand Prix games coming out this year to satisfy every possible fan of the genre. But, apart from slight differences in graphics and handling, there's not much to tell them apart, as they feature exactly the same tracks recreated with the same painstaking detail, the same cars and the same teams. If you're after something slightly different, *Grand Prix Legends* could be just the game to break the monotony.

Set in the 1967 season, with the full roster of classic drivers and many now defunct circuits, *GPL* does a very good job of convincingly simulating the raw danger of

racing on what are hardly more than big engines with wheels. The roar is thunderous as soon as you start to rev up and you can almost feel the frailty of the bathtub designs as they skip across the rough asphalt and, more often than not, cartwheel through the air into a group of idiotic spectators or a column of tyres. As you would expect, it's very tough going even on the easiest of difficulty settings and there's little room for precision handling. You can target power steering. You'll need a 3dfx card and a great deal of patience to get the most out of it, but it's certainly worth it.

PCZVERDICT 76%

GTA LONDON

★ £9.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM

WE SAY Remember you'll need a copy of the original to play it

Grand Theft Auto's attempt to go all groovy baby in '60s London didn't quite work out as well as we'd hoped. If you know London well, you'll also know that there's a real kick to be had from driving recklessly through Trafalgar Square in a stolen car spray-painted with the Union Jack to a psychedelic soundtrack and angry shouts of "Twat!" at every opportunity.

But, despite the *Italian Job* meets *Austin Powers* take on the top-down traffic insanity, the game never actually feels that different from the original. And, as with *Worms Reinforcements* last issue, it seems a bit cheeky to expect people to cough up the same money for an add-on pack as they did for the full game. It still beats playing *GTA2*, though.

PCZVERDICT

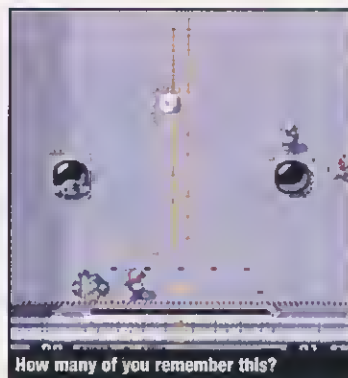
68%



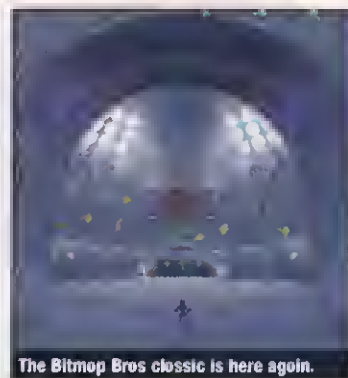
That's just too green to be London.



Spot Austin Powers' car.



How many of you remember this?



The Bitmap Bros classic is here again.

SPEEDBALL 2

★ £4.99 • Crucial Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 8Mb RAM

WE SAY A P133 seems more than enough

The Bitmap Brother's classic futuristic sports title is looking unsurprisingly dated, but the core of the game is still there. On one level it's a very fast-paced, hard-to-control violent contest between two teams. On the other, there are a tremendous amount of managerial options, player's

stats that can be upgraded, and armour and power-ups that can be picked up.

Even so, there is little reason why you would want to play it in the year 2000 other than for nostalgia's sake. After all, you wouldn't play the original *FIFA* now, would you?

PCZVERDICT

60%

SPACE QUEST IV

★ £4.99 • Crucial Entertainment • Out now

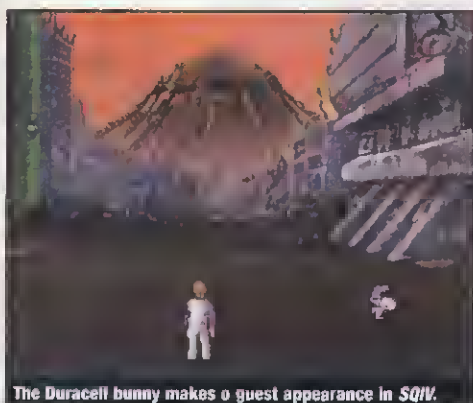
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 386SX Memory 2Mb RAM **WE SAY** If you're reading this magazine, chances are your PC is *too* fast

There was a certain endearing charm about the first *Space Quest* adventure, with its mixture of child-like graphics, text commands, simple puzzles and gentle humour. By this fourth instalment, however, the charm has long since died in a tragic mess of internal speaker beeps and pixels the size of bricks. A predecessor in many ways to the *Broken Sword* games, the narrative is just as grating, *SQIV* suffers from an awful interface and the impossibility of keeping Roger Wilco alive long enough to figure it out. Not that we're crying for him, though. We liked him much better when he was just a large helmet on top of a matchstick body.

PCZVERDICT

17%



The Duracell bunny makes a guest appearance in *SQIV*.

CYBER GLADIATORS

★ £4.99 • Crucial Entertainment • Out now

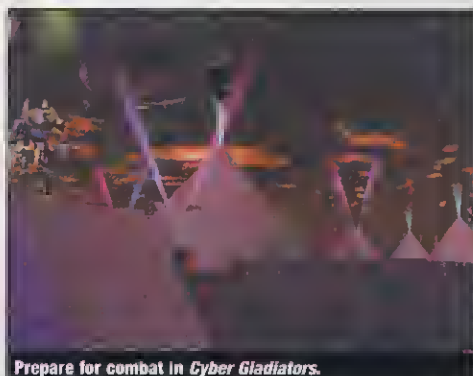
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3Dfx card is more than useful

The problem with really old games is that nobody wants to play them anymore. Especially when they weren't particularly inspiring the first time round. But, while *Cyber Gladiators* isn't a particularly inspired beat 'em up, it may surprise people to see just how well it has stood the test of time visually. As the title suggests, the gladiators fighting it out are of the robotic persuasion, dealing out kicks, punches and spear-throws with mechanical precision. Their reaction to your controls, however, leave much to be desired and you may be left wondering whether you've really had five quid's worth of entertainment out of it when you toss it aside and play something else.

PCZVERDICT

54%



Prepare for combat in *Cyber Gladiators*.

ARMOR COMMAND

★ £9.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM

WE SAY A 3D card makes it bearable to look at

An earlier attempt to make a 3D real-time strategy, *Armor Command* is more of an unplayable mess than a game, especially when compared to *Warzone 2100*. It looks awful, even in hardware acceleration, the interface is a nightmare and you have to go into the traditional top-down view to make sense of what's going on. We'd recommend extreme caution if it cost a fiver less – at this price you should give it a wide berth and go and check out *Warzone* instead.

PCZVERDICT

32%



Armor Command: just forget about it, will you?

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DELTA FORCE 2

REVIEWED Issue 85, January
SCORE 63%

What we thought

"Good multiplayer support, but the mediocre animation, blocky graphics and lack of real depth leave it well behind its competitors."

What you think

⊕ "I think that *Delta Force 2* is hugely addictive. Admittedly, when I first booted it up I thought: 'Jesus Christ - what in the name of genitals is this load of old granddads' pants?' But after a week, I found myself amazed by the gameplay. What better way to wind down after a hard day's work than to shoot people who don't speak English. The only major criticism is that you don't have campaigns in France, where you can run about killing people in supermarkets."

Simon Mooney, via email

Comment

The only thing we will say about *Delta Force 2* is that we never fully explored its multiplayer options, and have since discovered that they're really quite good - well, a saving grace anyway...

SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE

REVIEWED Issue 85, January
SCORE 89%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "The characters look like real, well-rounded people. The way they move and react to the environment is totally realistic."

What you think

⊕ "How great it is to get a game out of the box, install it, and find that it works first time with no patches. The graphics are superb, the atmosphere is just right and your blokes are not just a bunch of f**k-wits. If you thought *Hidden & Dangerous* was hard as a bastard (and I did), some of the missions in this are as hard as four bastards. Top stuff."

Neil McCorkell, via email

Comment

You're a strange person - let us know if you complete it.

GTA 2

REVIEWED Issue 84, Xmas
SCORE 70%

What we thought

"If you've never played *Grand Theft Auto*, we heartily recommend it."

What you think

⊕ "How can you rate such a brilliant game so low? The slower cars add to the realism and the gang theme adds a new dimension to the crime idea. The fact that you can put guns on your car and kill people with the fire engine hose makes it a thoroughly enjoyable and cartoony experience, which is far superior to its excellent predecessor."

Dave Turnbull, via email

⊕ "I have to agree with your

"How can you rate a great game such as *Final Fantasy VIII* with a measly score of 83 per cent? ...You have done a great game a severe injustice"

RICHARD KELLY, OUTRAGED BY THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

GTA2 review. Unlike the original, the action is anything but thick and tast. This is down to the PlayStation influence. Developers should put more effort into their conversions. We shouldn't be paying for this crap. If we want to play console games we'll go out and buy a PlayStation."

Iain Anderson, via email

Comment

We'll send you each other's address, then you can

SWAT 3: works perfectly straight out of the box. And it's brilliant.

have a good old-fashioned scrap about it.

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

REVIEWED Issue 86, February
SCORE 87%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "In terms of sheer depth, intelligence and atmosphere, *Torment* is state-of-the-role-playing-art."

What you think

⊕ "After spending most of my time over the last year or so

playing *Final Fantasy VII*, I decided to take a break from RPGs for a while. Then *Planescape: Torment* appeared. Thank the Lord! At first I thought the storyline wasn't one of the most compelling ever (no saving the world heroics like in *FFVII*), but the gameplay managed to grab me with its combination of great dialogue and fantastic character development. Hats off to Black Isle, when's the sequel?"

Simon Jenkins, Bristol



Planescape: Torment - no sequels yet for this fabulous RPG.



Comment

Sorry, but there is no news of a sequel. However, *Icewind Dale*, *Baldur's Gate 2* and *Arcanum* are all looking exceptionally good and should be right up your alley.

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

REVIEWED Issue 84, Xmas
SCORE 88%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "Like in *The Last Revelation*, the boundary between cut-scenes and gameplay is blurred so you feel like you're taking part in a film."

What you think

⊕ "Manthorp (Feedback *PCZ* #87), you are clearly mad and in love with a fictional character. You cannot bear the fact that *Indy* got a better score than *The Last Revelation* - and rightly so. *Indy* is far superior, and is far more interesting than traditional adventures. I played it again and again and was always struck by the great music, great story and great gameplay. An epic game!"

The Tingle, via email

Comment

Good to see there's still somebody out there with a bit of sense. Thank you.

THE SIMS

REVIEWED Issue 87, March
SCORE 86%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "There's so much you can do - we'd need to play the game for months, then write a book if we were to do it justice."

What you think

⊕ "The *Sims* is amazing! There are so many things to do and I've barely scratched the surface yet."



Quake III: over-hyped or under-rated?



The Sims just keeps on winning admirers. And there are no Australian accents.

⬅️ Talk about deep. I urge everyone to go out and buy *The Sims* now.”

Chris Hill, via email

★ “Considering it’s a cross between *Neighbours* and a Tamagotchi, *The Sims* is a very playable and addictive game. I like the way there’s almost an infinite amount of scenarios and lifestyles. The AI is a bit dodgy though – they piss themselves too often and can’t have an affair with the house maid. Anyway, I’ll just say that I’ve started seeing my friends as Sims now – things will never be the same again...”

Chris Steele-Davies, Bridgewater

Comment

Does anybody disagree with Chris and Chris? So far there are no takers...

FINAL FANTASY VIII

REVIEWED Issue 87, March
SCORE 83%

What we thought

PCZ AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE “It’s still obvious that *FFVIII* has originated from a console game and anyone who says otherwise is talking from the wrong end.”

What you think

★ “How can you rate a great game such as this with a measly score of 83 per cent? Yes, it’s fairly linear but that’s not so bad, and it certainly has more interaction than its predecessor. How on earth can you say that the graphics become boring after a while? Yes, they lose some of their original appeal once you see them a few times, but they don’t become boring. You have done a great game a severe injustice.”

Richard Kelly, London

Comment

83 per cent under our new rating system is a good score,

especially as in reality *FFVIII* has even more boring cut-scenes and fewer interesting sub-games than *FFVII* had. We’re glad you can put up with the linearity though – most sensible people can’t stand it.

QUAKE III

REVIEWED Issue 86, February
SCORE 89%

What we thought

PCZ AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE “It you’re not looking for a single-player, story-driven extravaganza, and you’re happier playing with others than alone, then this is the first-person’s finest hour.”

What you think

★ “*Quake III* has got to be the most over-hyped game ever. The graphics are pretty and most arenas are interesting, but the fun stops there. After several days of frenzied deathmatching it all gets a tad too repetitive. Personally, I feel *Unreal Tournament* is far more varied with its InstaGib-Jump matches!”

MC Spanner, Winchester

★ “*Quake III* is much underrated in my opinion. OK, the gameplay isn’t that varied and the bots aren’t as intelligent as they are in *Unreal Tournament*, but the weapons are simple and the deathmatch is fast and unrivalled. *UT*’s weapons are far too complicated, all having a secondary fire and all. Overall *QIII* is a top game, well done id – another hit.”

MetalEd, via email

★ “So that’s it then? We expected very little from *UT* and we got the world. We expected the world from *QIII* and we got very little. But maybe not. Despite initial disappointments with *QIII*, you’ll find that it’s a slow burner. Ultimately it blossoms into the

best game of all time.

“*UT*, meanwhile, is excellent but soulless. A year down the road and you’ll love *QIII*, but will only fondly remember *UT*. Believe me, you know that this voice speaks the truth.”

Alan Bristow, via email

★ “Too many people are saying that *UT*’s weapons are better than *QIII*’s. How can you say this? All of the weapons in *QIII* are perfectly balanced: the shotgun is exactly what it should be (deadly in close range, pants at long range) and not a crappy supercharged killing machine like in *QII*. The BFG is also a huge improvement – fast, responsive and deadly.”

“I do think *UT* is a great game too, but *QIII* just edges it, especially on the weapons. Merge the two, then you’ll have something to talk about!”

Richard Frosztega, Surrey

★ “Having played both the single-player and multiplayer games of *QIII* and *UT*, I have found that *QIII* is much faster with virtually no lag at all. However, bring on ADSL and *Unreal* should reign supreme!”

Richard Banborough, via email

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PCZ CLASSIC “Not only is it likeable, fun and entertaining, it’s also feature packed, intelligent and a worthy playing field for all gamers.”

What you think

★ “Just because *Unreal Tournament* throws up a few new ideas for online gaming that doesn’t make it superior to *Quake III*. I took your advice and got

hold of both games along with three of my mates. The result: a unanimous decision for *Quake III*. I’m sorry, but we all believe that *UT* just doesn’t have the same atmosphere and playability.”

Dominic Watts, via email

★ “What a game! The warm tuzzy feeling you get the first time you plant a bullet in your opponent’s forehead... Ah, there’s nothing like it. The bottom line is: this game kicks ass. *Quake* is dead. Long live *Unreal*!”

Graham Lannigan, via email

★ “Pure class. The single-player is excellent and well thought out, but you haven’t played it properly until you’ve played it over a LAN. It’s the best multiplayer game to date, beating even *Half-Life* and *AvP*. You should have given it at least 94%.”

“As for *Quake III* – it has to be one of the worst first-person shooters I have ever played. The mods are fairly good, but the weapons are crap.”

Tim Crittenden, Nottingham

★ “Why is *QIII* outselling *UT*? I’ll tell you: *Quake* is the recognised FPS, thus people will buy it no matter how crap it is (like the *FIFA* series). The

truth is that *UT* is way better than *QIII* – the weapons kick ass, the bots are good, and the variation in styles is just the tip of the iceberg. You haven’t lived unless you’ve run up that beach in ‘Overlord’ and seen your mates get fragged in front of you – ORGASMIC!”

Simon Chang, North Wales

★ “You asked for criticism of *UT*, so here goes... Load times! I have a PII 400 with 128Mb RAM and a GeForce DDR – a respectable machine for running *UT*. So how come when I start the game it feels like I’ve gone back to Speccy tape loading?”

Mike Kirk, via email

Comment

So there you have it. The debate rages on, with *UT* always marginally ahead in the opinion polls. So, how come this isn’t reflected in the charts? Like you’ve said yourselves, it could all be down to hype. Or the fact that *QIII* is a damn good game. And yes, we still play them both solidly in the office. How we get a magazine out is a mystery... [E2]

UT: Not winning the chart battle with QIII.



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HOW TO...

BUILD AN UNREAL TOURNAMENT LEVEL

A step-by-step tutorial on the ins and outs of creating an *Unreal Tournament* level

★ OUR MAN WITH THE CHISEL Alan Bourke

Have you played your way through *Unreal Tournament* and other first-person shooters, and wondered how those seamless professional deathmatch levels are created? Or maybe you habitually download user created levels for these games and are convinced that you could do better? Well, perhaps you can. Level designing utilities have come a long way since the old *Doom* and *Duke Nukem* days, and are now incredibly stable, fully-featured and relatively easy to use.

UNREAL ED

We'll be using *UnrealEd*, the *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament* level editor.

You'll find *UnrealEd* on the official Unreal Technology website (<http://unreal.epicgames.com>). You'll also find a copy on the game's second CD,

in the 'UnrealEd' subdirectory. We'll be looking at a lot of its features – covering them all would take a fairly hefty book – but that's fine, as what you need to know to create a playable level is surprisingly small.

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND (VERY IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND STRAIGHTAWAY)

Look at the middle of the *UnrealEd* screen (see Fig 2), where there are four viewing windows onto your empty level. In particular, look at the bottom left of these windows, which is the 3D representation of the world. You should see *Tron*-like blue grid lines stretching off into the vast empty void. Yes? Well actually, no. The very important concept here is that an

empty level can be regarded as a vast expanse of *solidity*, not emptiness. So a lot of what you are doing when creating a level is actually carving out, or to use the more common term 'subtracting' hollow spaces from a solid block. Of course, when you've subtracted out an empty room, you might want to put a table in there. In that case you would be 'adding' material back into the empty space that you created. The technical term for all this, should you care, is Constructive Solid Geometry. All other objects within the game, from bots to players to weapons, ammo, lights and so on are all referred to as 'Actors'. Also, the word 'brush' will be mentioned frequently. A brush in this context is any solid object within the level, be it a room, a table, stairs, a pool, water, an elevator or whatever. Happy? Then onward...

...AND A VERY GOOD HABIT TO GET INTO STRAIGHTAWAY

UnrealEd is incredibly stable (especially compared to something like the *Duke Nukem* editor 'Build'), but at some point you will still crash it – usually by trying to do something optimistic, such as creating a sphere with 10,000 sides. So to avoid stress and the possibility that you'll just give up on it, repeat after me: SAVE EARLY AND OFTEN. A good idea is to save each stage separately, so that you can step back if needs be.

A TOUR AROUND THE UNREAL ED SCREEN

The *UnrealEd* screen is divided into three parts. To the left is the Toolbar.

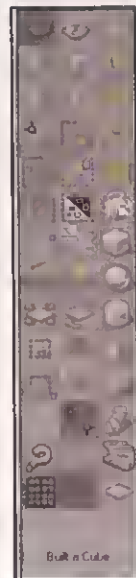


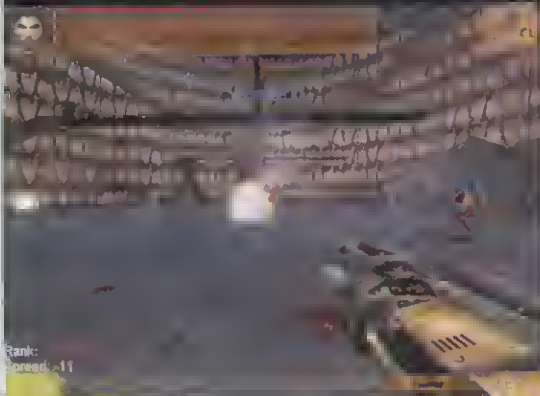
Fig 1 – The *UnrealEd* Toolbar tools, from top left: Move Camera, Zoom Camera, Add Brush To World, Rotate Brush, Shear Brush, Subtract Brush From World, Scale Brush, Stretch Brush, Intersect Brush, SnapScale Brush, Select All Polys, Deintersect Brush, Select All Actors, Select Actors Inside Brush, Add Special Brush, Select None, Invert ActorSelection State, Add Movable Brush, Replace Selected Brushes, Replace Selected Non-Brush Actors, Build A Cube, Undo, Redo, Build A Sphere, Pan Textures, Rotate Textures, Build A Cylinder, Drawing Region: Selected Actors, Drawing Region Off, Build A Cone, Hide Selected Actors, Drawing Region Brush Z (depth), Build A Stair, Not implemented, Toggle Vertex Snap, Build A Spiral Stair, Get Help, Camera Speed, Build A Curved Stair, Toggle Grid Mode, Toggle Rotation Grid, Build A Sheet.

It contains all the three-dimensional 'primitives' such as the cube, cylinder and

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

If you don't have at least 64Mb of RAM, then by all means give this tutorial a go, but expect prolonged disc swapping. *UnrealEd* is usable enough with this amount of memory, but don't try play-testing your level from within it. Doing this loads the actual game, and you will be in swap file hell. 96Mb or 128Mb of RAM is ideal. A desktop resolution of 800x600 is the absolute minimum to get any serious work done, and I would strongly recommend running at 1024x768. I used a 16Mb Riva TNT-based video card, but any 16Mb card with decent Direct3D acceleration should be fine.

Catch the rocket. If you can.



Notice pretty explosions in a big dome.



Remember: save early and often.



UNREAL TOURNAMENT LEVEL IN 10 EASY STEPS

so on. It also has various selection and manipulation tools, the more important of which we'll come to in due course. You can find out what any tool does by simply right-clicking on it.

The middle of the screen consists of four viewing windows as discussed

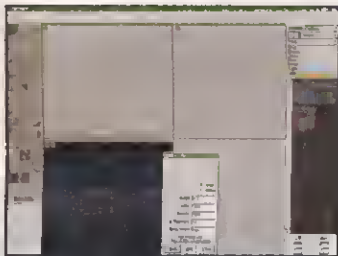


Fig 2 - UnrealEd's four views.

previously. The top leftmost square is the 2D Map Overhead view. This looks down from above on the vast expanse of solidity that is an empty level. The top right window is the 2D Map XZ view. Think of this as the view from the front of the level. The bottom right window is the 2D Map YZ view - this is the view from the side. And finally at the bottom left is the fun one, the 3D Perspective view. You may have noticed a small downward pointing arrow in the top

left of each window. This activates the window's menu when clicked. From that menu you can, for example, change a window from being the overhead view to the perspective view.

To the right is the Browser (see Fig 3).

From here you can load the various support files, such as textures, sounds and classes that can be used in a level. As the tutorial progresses, we'll be using this a lot. You'll notice an eye with an arrow sticking out of it in the 2D view windows. This represents the camera position and orientation. You can click and drag this around.

Fig 3 - The Browser.

MOVING ABOUT IN THE VIEWS
In any of the 2D view windows, clicking the left mouse button and moving the mouse will scroll the window

around to different parts of the level. Holding down both mouse buttons and moving the mouse forward or backwards will zoom in and out. In the 3D view, things are slightly different. Clicking in the view window, holding the left mouse button down and moving the mouse forward and backward will make the camera move forward and backward, and moving the mouse left and right will make it rotate left and right. Holding the right mouse button down and moving the mouse forward and backward will make the camera 'look' up and down. And finally, holding both mouse buttons down and moving the mouse will

'slide' the camera in the relevant direction. You can increase or decrease the movement speed using the tool near the bottom of the toolbar with three small arrows on it.

The best way to get used to all this, of course, is by actually doing it. So head for the 'File' menu on the main UnrealEd menu bar at the top of the screen. From there, choose 'Open Level'. The Open dialog should default to your Unreal Tournament Maps subdirectory, with all the actual game levels there. A good one to play with is 'DOM-Tutorial.unr', so double-click on that to load it into the editor. Then use the

BRUSHES

- Builder Brush** - A 3D shape created from one of the 'primitives' (cube, cylinder, etc), which is used repeatedly to carve or build other Brushes.
 - Brush** - Built by a Builder Brush, when the Builder Brush is subtracted from the world to make a hollow space, or added to create a solid structure inside a hollow space.
 - Solid and Hollow Brushes** - If a Builder Brush is created from the Cylinder primitive, then it can be solid like a Refresher mint, or hollow like a Polo.
- What sort of brush appears in the level depends whether you add or subtract the Builder Brush.

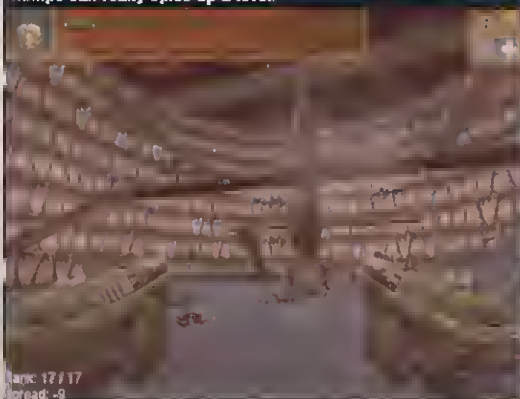
“THOU SHALT NOT CHOKE THY FRAMERATE. Seriously, one of the things we fight with all the time is the detail/speed balance. We can always tell when our poly count is high, because the room will just look too damn good. Watch the amount of detail you put in, and be prepared to rip your baby to shreds to get it playable”

ALAN WILLARO, EPIC LEVEL DESIGNER ON UNREAL TOURNAMENT TALKS ABOUT HIS GOLDEN RULE

Look at those lovely textures.



Ramps can really spice up a level.



Quick, he hasn't seen you yet.



← mouse in the various windows to have a good drive around. If you make any changes to the level by mistake, please be sure not to save it!

STEP 1 - YOUR FIRST ROOM

Let's get chiselling straight away. Start with an empty level, either by starting *UnrealEd* or by selecting 'File/New Level' from the main menu. Then right-click on the 'Cube' primitive tool to open up its properties sheet (see Fig 2). Make the Height 512 and the Breadth and Width both 1024. Then click the 'Build' button. You'll see a red wireframe cube appear in the 3D view window, and the various other angles in the other windows. What we've done is create a Builder Brush. We're going to use this brush to subtract material from the world to create an empty room brush, so click on the 'Subtract Brush From World' tool (see Fig 4).

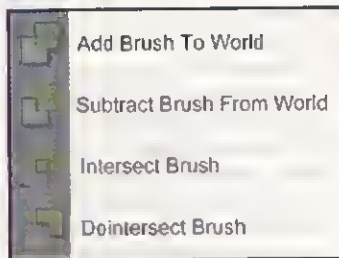


Fig 4 - Brush tools. Congratulations - you've built a room. Easy, isn't it? If you hold down 'Ctrl', then click and drag in one of the '2D views', you should see the Builder Brush slide out of the way, allowing you to see the brown outline of the actual brush.

STEP 2 - GETTING THE PAINTERS IN

You'll notice the particularly foul textures on the walls and ceilings - our next step should probably be to improve these. Look at the top of the Browser on the right-hand side of the screen (see Fig 3). The drop-down list at the very top should read 'Textures'. Below you'll see a bank of loaded textures from which to select. Click on the 'Load' button at the bottom of the Browser and a dialogue box will appear, from which you can load additional texture files, all of which have a .UTX extension. Scroll over to the right and double-click on 'XTDRTION.UTX'. The drop-down list underneath the word 'Browse' on the browser bar will show 'Xtortion' as the currently selected texture

group, and you can also see a much snazzier bunch of textures. Most game editors leave you to search through reams of textures to find suitable ones. Not *UnrealEd*, however.



Fig 5 - Filtering the Texture List.

As shown in Fig 5, you can filter the list to textures suitable for just walls, for example. Remember that this is merely a help feature - you can apply any texture anywhere. Pick 'Wall' from the list, and from the filtered list of textures below choose 'eb_wall1e' by single-clicking on it. If you want a closer look at the texture, click the 'texture size' button, which is most to the left, just above the texture display window. This will also display the dimensions

of the texture. Once you've selected the texture, look at the 3D view again. If you're floating outside of your recently created room, you should be able to see three of the walls. Let's select them by holding down the 'Ctrl' key, and clicking once on each in turn in the 3D view (see Fig 6).



Fig 6 - Walls Multiselect For Textures.

They'll be highlighted in light blue once they're selected. Then right-click on any of the highlighted surfaces and select 'Apply texture eb_wall1e' from the menu. We've missed one wall that we can't see, of course, so spin your camera around in the 3D view so that you can see it, and then apply the same texture to it. You may notice that the texture seems to be repeated vertically on the walls. This is because this texture is 256x256 in size, but we made our room with a height of 512. We can, however, expand the texture to fit. Right-

click on any of the walls again and from the menu select 'Surface Properties (x selected)': x should be 1 if you're working with one surface, however, you can use 'Ctrl' as before to apply this to multiple surfaces. From the tabbed dialog that appears, select the 'Scale' tab (see Fig 7).

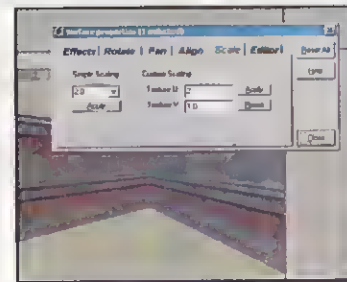


Fig 7 - Scaling a texture.

Since the texture is half the height it needs to be, we're going to enter 2.0 in the 'Simple Scaling' field, and 'Apply' it. The texture should now be the height of the wall. Repeat as necessary for the other walls. Then select 'Ceiling' and 'Floor' from the texture filter list and apply nice textures to the ceiling and floor in exactly the same way. Once you've done all that, save. You can, of course, mix and match textures from any number of texture files. You may have noticed a Pan section in the Surface Properties also. The texture can be scrolled around on the surface from there, so that it lines up properly. You can also use two powerful tools on the Toolbar, Pan and Rotate Textures. In the 3D view, select or multiselect surfaces and, with the 'Ctrl' key held down, you can move the texture around with the mouse. One last thing - if you apply a texture of, say, rivetted panels on a surface meant to be a floor, *UnrealEd* may stretch the texture. To tile it properly, bring up 'Surface Properties' and under the 'Align' tab choose 'Floor/Ceiling'.

STEP 3 - HIT THE LIGHTS

You're probably dying to see what your level really looks like now, so press F8 to bring up the 'Rebuilder' dialog. Now to be honest, this does something so complicated that I'd have to explain it to Mr Spock twice. In a nutshell, however, this takes your entire level, processes and optimises the data, and does all the calculation required to take what you have in front of you and generate something playable. After that, all that you have to do is click on the 'Rebuild Geometry' button. Once you've done that, please stop panicking. I know you are, because I know your newly minted room has disappeared from the 3D view - or has it? Rebuilding the level automatically switched the 3D view into 'Dynamic Lighting' mode, but we haven't put any lights in yet. To go back, drop down the '3D Windows' Menu, go to the 'Mode' option and select 'Textures'. This puts everything back into fullbright and ignores all lights in the level. Most of the time it's best to work in Textures mode, and only enter Dynamic Lighting to check how things will actually look.

Take a look at the 'Map Dverhead' view. You should still see a red square representing the top of the Builder Brush we used to create this room. Left-click on the square to select it, then hold down 'Ctrl' and move the mouse. You'll see that the red outline moves, leaving a square that was underneath - that's the top of the actual room. So the red Builder Brush isn't just used once - you could move it a bit and then use the 'Subtract Brush From World' tool to create another room the exact same size as the first. Similarly, you can select the 'Builder Brush' and move it in the other two 2D views. Left-click once in the '3D View' window and you'll see the red wireframe of the brush will have moved accordingly (you might need to zoom out to get it back into view).

Actually creating a light source is easy. Just right-click in any of the view windows and select 'Add Light Here'. Use 'FB' to rebuild again, and then change the '3D View' back to 'Dynamic Lighting'. A little torch icon should appear in the view windows. You should now have a dimly lit room (see Fig 8).

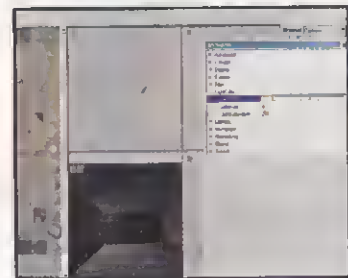


Fig 8 - When light is applied the properties change.

Starting to look more like the real thing, isn't it? You can move the Light Actor around in any of the views in the same way as moving the brush. Just select it by left-clicking on the 'torch' icon (you'll probably have to zoom the particular view window in) and then use 'Ctrl' and the mouse to move it around. So to move it into the top corner of the room, you could use a combination of the three 2D views to get it into place. Think it's a little too dim? Then right-click on it, and select 'Light Properties'. From the Light's Properties tree, expand the 'LightColour' branch (see Fig 8). In there are values and sliders for Brightness, Hue and Saturation that you can fiddle with. For the moment we'll have a red light, so make the Hue value 255 and the Saturation 127 (if the Saturation is left at the default of 255 everything will be white no matter what you do). You may need to rebuild with 'FB' to see your changes.

When you're finished, to save yourself time, right-click on the 'Light' again and select 'Duplicate'. An exact copy will appear beside it, and you can move that around and so on. Note that absolutely everything in *Unreal Tournament*, including the level, the players, the sounds, the textures, the brush in the editor and so on is an object with adjustable properties just like that Light.

PLAYING WITH LIGHTS

With regard to the LightColour settings, Brightness is obvious - it's how much light the source produces. Saturation is essentially the amount of each component colour of the light that surrounding textures will reflect back, in effect how 'matt' or 'gloss' they are. The hue is the actual colour, ranging from 0 to 255. The main colours are represented by numbers as follows:

- White = 0
- Green = 64
- Purple = 192
- Yellow = 23
- Blue = 128
- Red = 255

The other colours are values in between - unfortunately there's no easy way to select a colour in *UnrealEd* so you'll have to experiment.



STEP 4 - ADDING THINGS BACK

You can put Light Actors all over your level (or leave it dark) without a problem. But adding a light source means just that – the big light fixtures that you see along the walls and roots don't appear automatically. So let's create a nice light fixture. Using the Xtortion textures again, filter the list to 'Light'. You'll notice three light textures, and we'll use one of the red ones, assuming that you created your lights as red in the previous step. Right-click on that texture to bring up its Properties, and from the tree expand the 'Texture' branch. Notice that the Uclamp and Vclamp values are both 64 – these are essentially the default height and width of the texture. Remember we saw that our wall texture for the room was 256x256? That's how you check. Create a new cube Builder Brush of Height and Width 64, Breadth 32. Then hit the 'Add Brush To World' tool to create the light fixture. Remember – we've already subtracted material to make the room, now we're adding material back in. All the faces of the created brush will be the same texture, however, we only want the front face to look like a light. So select each of the other faces in turn and apply

a suitable texture to them. Try filtering the texture list to 'Girder'. Then look at the 2D views, move the new brush up to one of the upper corners of the room, after which you'll probably need to 'FB' rebuild in order to see the changes. If you are having a bit of trouble getting it lined up exactly with the wall, right-click on an empty space and, via the Grid option, and lower the grid size. Then move one of your red 'Light Actors' (these theatrical types are all the same) in front of it. Right-click on the 'Light Actor' (make sure it's not the light fixture brush) and from the 'LightColour' section of its Properties turn up the 'Light Brightness' until it looks just the way you want it (see fig 9).

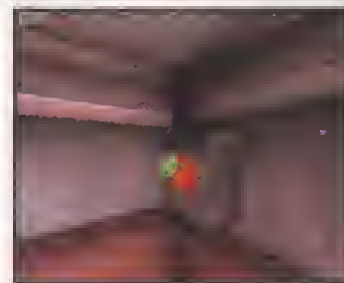


Fig 9 – Red Light District
The last thing to do is single-click on the front face of the 'light texture brush', get its properties and set 'Bright Corners' to 'on'. That's one light texture then – we need three more for the room. Wait, come back – you don't have to do it all over

again each time! In one of the 2D views, deselect everything by left-clicking once in an empty area, then hold down 'Ctrl' and left-click on the 'light texture brush' and the 'Light Actor'. Then right-click, and select 'Duplicate'. This will produce a copy of the two, slightly offset. Hold down 'Ctrl' and drag them into position on the same wall. Then repeat the duplicate process. This brush is going on the far wall, so it needs to be rotated to face in the opposite direction. Simply right-click on the brush, choose 'Transform' and 'Mirror About X'. Then drag and position it and its Light Actor on the far wall. Then duplicate that once more and position on the same wall. A very useful tip if you can't see where you're dragging to: if you hold down 'Ctrl-Shift' and drag in a 2D window, the dragged Actor stays central while the level moves about it, which is much easier than zooming out or shunting it over bit by bit. You're probably aching to see what it looks like for real. We need somewhere for players to spawn into the level, so change the Browser bar list to 'Classes'. That should produce a scary tree with lots of sub-branches to expand, so open out the 'NavigationPoint' branch and single-click on 'PlayerStart'. Then right-click in any of the views, and choose 'Add PlayerStart Here'. Move the Actor around in the usual way it needed. Then finally, with the Unreal Tournament CD in the

Why not get your dog shampooed?*



drive, select 'Play Level' from the 'File' menu. After an amount of time and disk thrashing determined by the amount of RAM you have, you'll be dumped into the familiar pre-level 'Press Fire To Begin' state, where you can fly around and take a look at the level. Then press 'Fire' to enter it. You weren't expecting that, were you? Yes, you were thrown into a six-player botmatch with only Enforcers as weapons. Har! Never mind, quit from the game in the normal way and you'll be returned to the editor.

STEP 5 - FORGING AHEAD

That's our first little red light area created, but we obviously need more real estate in this level. Let's create some stairs leading out of the room. Create another cube Builder Brush with Height 1024, Width 512, and Breadth 256. Position as shown in Fig 10.

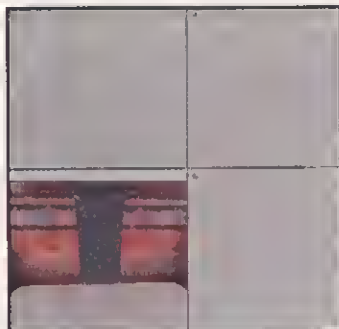


Fig 10 - Forging Ahead.

It's important that it intersects exactly with the wall of the original room. Then subtract it from the world and apply suitable textures. Right-click on the 'stairs primitive', and enter its dimensions as in Fig 11.

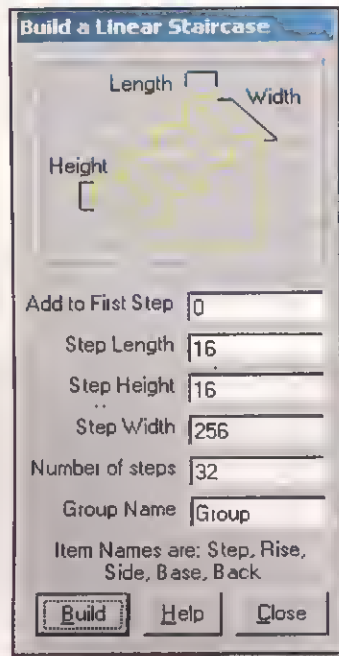


Fig 11 - Stair Properties. Its Step Height is 1024/32 (ie 32) because the stairwell we built was 1024 units high and we've specified in the Stairs' properties that there are 32 steps.

Now position the Builder Brush as shown in Fig 12.

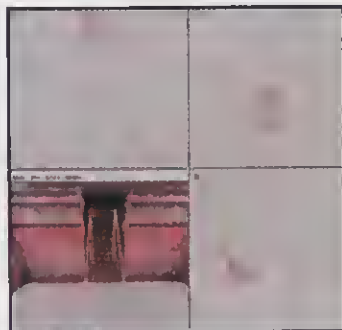


Fig 12 - Stairs in position.

You'll probably have to use the 'Transform' option of the Builder Brushes' properties to 'Mirror About Y'. 'Add Brush To World' will fill it in once it's lined up, and then throw some lights in.

This level is going to be a fairly wide-open affair, so we'll create a large arena area. Right-click on the 'properties' of the cylinder primitive and enter as shown in Fig 13.



Fig 13 - Cylindrical Arena Area.

Make sure that the 'Solid' radio button is selected, then position as shown in Fig 13 and 'Subtract Brush From World'. This will make our staircase emerge near the edge of the arena area. Using the 'STARSHIP.UTX' texture file, apply suitable textures to the cylindrical area, and add lights around it - preferably red ones, the reason for which will become apparent. Add a couple of PlayerStarts in there as well. Then save, 'F8' rebuild and test it out.

STEP 6 - THE SKY'S NO LIMIT

It's all a bit claustrophobic at the moment, isn't it? Our cylindrical area might be better served by being open to the sky. You could just apply a cloud texture (try it if you like), but that just ends up looking like a roof with clouds painted on it. Also, any projectiles fired at it will explode on impact. What we need is some parallax, and the illusion of infinity. We can achieve this by using an ingenious invention called a SkyBox. Create a hollow cube-shaped room off somewhere well away from the main part of the level. Make it 256x512x512. Load up the 'SHANESKY.UTX' textures, and apply one of the beautiful red skies to all surfaces inside your SkyBox. Add some lights up near the roof to illuminate it. OK, so far it's just another room. Change the Browser to 'Classes' and expand the 'Intro\ZoneInfo' branch. Left-click on the '*SkyZoneInfo'

option, then right-click in your '3D' window somewhere in the middle, and select 'Add SkyZoneInfo Here'. An Actor icon with a question mark will appear. Think of this as a camera pointing at a fake sky scene, through which we can look from elsewhere in the level. Using the other views, make sure the SkyZoneInfo Actor is near the middle of your SkyBox. Now scoot over to your cylindrical area, and select the roof texture. Right-click on it, and under 'Surface Properties' select the 'Effects' tab, and check the 'Fake Backdrop' box. Then 'F8' rebuild, save and test. What a lovely sunset.

One thing to remember about SkyBoxes is that they don't have to be big enough to cover the whole level. The effect is hugely magnified, and a box the size we just made is fine. Also, you can only have one per level. Their use isn't limited to just skies, either. If you open and look at the 'DOM Condemned' domination level, you'll find an entire cityscape build 'diorama' style inside a SkyBox. Effects such as flyovers by spacecraft can be achieved this way too.

STEP 7 - LOTS OF GUNS

Nobody wants a six-player Enforcer shootout, so let's add some hardware. Weapons, armour, pickups and ammo are added into the world in exactly the same ways as the other Actors. From the 'Classes' list on the Browser, expand the 'Inventory\Weapon\TournamentWeapon' branch and salivate over the arsenal in there. To add one, just left-click on it to select it, then in a view window right-click and choose 'Add <whatever> Here'. Easy. Similarly, ammo can be found in the 'Inventory\Pickup\Ammo\TournamentAmmo' branch, and armour and other pickups in the 'Inventory\Pickup' branch. And if you fancy yourself as a bit of a hacker, you can change their properties to, say, up the damage dealt.

STEP 8 - PREFABULOUS

We've got some nice lighting and texturing in now, and a sky, but the level is still just two big open areas. Let's fill them up with some decoration by making the underground room into a hangar, and the outer area into a launch pad. This involves building two spacecraft.

A good way to shortcut that building process is to use prefabs, or game objects that someone else has created and which you can use in your level. Unreal Tournament has some built in that were used in the game itself, and you can download others from the Internet sites mentioned elsewhere.

Under 'Classes' in the Browser bar, expand the 'Odecoration' branch, and add the 'IntroShip' into the underground room. Check out the 3D window and guffaw at the ship's smallness. It is, of course, that size because it was designed to be seen in the distance. Luckily, we can scale it up a bit. Just bring up its properties and under the 'Display' branch change 'DrawScale' to '6'. Now move it around

in the views like any other Actor. Make sure it's resting properly on the floor of the hangar. Now add some 'SteelBox' and 'SmallSteelBox' Actors around the area as decoration, but also as cover. You could stick some weapons and ammo behind them, and add some gantries and so on - in fact from here on in it's largely up to you. You can see from fig 14 that the beginnings of

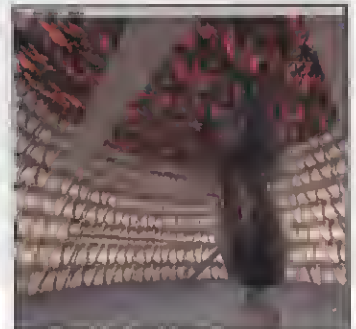


Fig 14 - Adding to the level.

some gantries have been added around the spaceship.

Notice now that a lot of these Actors are aligned very squarely with the grid, which isn't necessarily like real life. This brings us to...

STEP 9 - ROTATION AND DEINTERSECTION

It's pretty easy to rotate things like prefabs - brushes are more difficult and the editor may only allow you certain types of rotation. Click on our ship to highlight it in green, and select the 'Rotation' tool on the Toolbar - it's the first one on the second row. Then in the view windows with a combination of left and right mouse dragging you can rotate the prefabs in any axis. Get the spacecraft lined up with the stairs, and move some crates around to make them look more natural. You can also rotate the Builder Brush like this, which is very useful.

We'll also add a dome area in the outside arena, so create and position a 'Spherical Builder Brush' as shown in Fig 15. This will give us a dome above the floor, but there's also the other half of the sphere under the floor, which needs to be removed. Use the 'Brush Deintersect' tool to lop off the bottom half as in Fig 15.

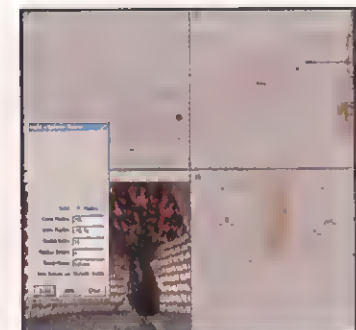


Fig 15 - Dome Builder Brush after Deintersection.

Use 'Add Brush To World', then create a door and put a PlayerStart, lights and some weapons inside.

STEP 10 - UP THE JUNCTION

When you test the level, you may have noticed that the bots seem fairly stupid. They'll shoot at each other, and might make a dash for a weapon, but if they spawn into the lower room, for example, they'll never leave it. The reason is that they need a Navigation Network of junctions, or 'nodes', around the level. You can construct this manually, and for bigger levels you'll have to. For our purposes, however, we'll let *UnrealEd* do the work. Rebuild, then save your work. Find the *UnrealEd* Log Window, and at the prompt type 'Build Paths'. Then put the kettle on, because you'll be waiting a good five to ten minutes for this to parse the level. Luckily, you don't need to do it too often. The next time you test, you should have a bit more of a fight on your hands.

CONCLUSION - WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEVEL?

Think about all the best *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake* levels. There are very few with dead-end corridors. There are very few with increased damage pickups. Not many with the 'grand slam' weapons like the BFG10K or the Redeemer

liberally sprinkled. A good level flows naturally, and has landmarks for players to orient themselves. It doesn't have mazes. These days, it probably won't have doors or ladders because they are fiddly and interrupt the play. Think teleports. Think bounce pads. The level should have 'attractor' areas, where the play will focus naturally, and into which you can pick off groups of opponents. Group a rocket launcher with some power armour in an open circular area and - bingo - instant attractor. There are a lot of things which go towards creating a classic like Q2DM6, and if you come anywhere close to that achievement then your level will be pimped out to greedy deathmatchers worldwide, kudos will be thrust upon you, and top international model birds will be buying tickets on your doorstep.

And put those dreams of creating an *Unreal Tournament* level based around your house out of your mind right now. It might be good practice, it might be fun for you to run around, but it'll seem cramped, badly designed and boring for anyone else. Unless of course your surname is 'Stroggos', you collect high-yield energy weapons and you live on an abandoned space station. [E]



This isn't just a level, it's a work of art.



INTERNET RESOURCES

This is just the beginning - many more tutorials, files, prefabs and friendly advice pertaining to *Unreal Tournament* and *UnrealEd* can be found on the Internet. Among the gaming-related stuff you'd expect, there's also www.unrealty.net. This is an architectural design company which is using *UnrealEd* to produce virtual-reality style walkthroughs of proposed building designs. Just goes to show what a powerful tool you have at your disposal.

IRC Channels

- On GamesLink - irc.gameslink.net
- #utgames - General *Unreal Tournament* based discussion.
- #unreal - Discussion on *UnrealEd*.
- #unrealscript - Discussion about the programming language used in *Unreal Tournament*.

Usenet Newsgroups

- alt.games.unreal

Web Sites

- www.unreal.epicgames.com - The official *Unreal Technology* homepage.
- <http://doe.lowlife.com/database/unreal> - Your first stop should be *The Unreal Tutorial Database* at this link.
- www.unrealized.com - Excellent editing-based site with tutorials and forums, all in a dreadful choice of font.
- www.unrealized.net - Another top editing-based site.
- www.dukeed.com - Although dedicated to the upcoming *Duke Nukem Forever*, there's a lot of *UnrealEd* info there since *DNF* uses the *Unreal Tournament* engine.
- www.utworld.net - General *UT* site.
- www.planetunreal.com - Huge site, lots of news and links.
- www.unrealuniverse.com - General *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament* site.
- utds.ut.org.pl - Homepage for *Unreal Tournament Developer Studio*.

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Feeling frustrated? Can't quite get past a certain level? Want to be the best player in the gaming universe? Then you've come to the right place – Cheat Master provides the cure for all your gaming ills, and if you're after a more personal service, look no further than ZONE's man with a mission, Mr Keith Pullin...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

116 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

117 DEAR KEITH

Not quite sure how you'll make it through another day without getting to the next level? Can't sleep due to a Lara Croft induced nightmare? Then turn to Uncle Keith for some handy hints.

118 SWAT 3

Get ready to play cops and robbers with PC ZONE's guide to handling your men and making your SWAT 3 missions worthwhile.

122 FINAL FANTASY VIII

This month we bring you the first part of the *Final Fantasy VIII* walkthrough, with plenty of tips and tricks to keep you busy.

126 DEAR WANDY

Need a hand with a problem or query that's been driving you mad? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

128 WATCHDOG

If you're having troubles dealing with a pesky PC company and can't get any answers, then let the consumers' champion Adam Phillips guide you through your legal rights...

YOUR HOSTS



Phil Wand



Keith Pullin



Adam Phillips



Mark Hill

CHEAT MASTER

Looking for the easy way out of your latest gaming dilemma? Then what are you waiting for? Read on and get cheating...

CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions on the cover CD this month. Find out what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7JH

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

THE SIMS

Electronic Arts

Add to the fun of *The Sims* with the following: Press 'Ctrl, Shift, Alt and C' the enter these codes:

autonomy # Sim intelligence (1-100)
water_tool Change your home into an island fortress
map_edit on/off Edit map
set_hour # Change time of day (1-24)
set_speed # Change game speed (-1000 to +1000)
Interests Change personality and interests
Klapaucius Gives \$1000
grow_grass # Grow grass # (1-150)
route_balloons on/off Tutorial on/off
sweep on/off Shows ticks
tile_info on/off Toggle tile info
log_mask Set event logging mask
draw_all_frames on/off Toggle frames

DELTA FORCE 2

NovaLogic

Need to use excess force?

Press '~' to display the console,

then type one of the following codes followed by 'Return':

thetrooper God mode
stillife Invisibility
diewithyourbootson Infinite ammunition
sunandsteel Reload ammunition
revelations Eight artillery rounds

URBAN CHAOS

Eidos Interactive

Press 'F9' to turn on the console and type 'bangunsnofgames'.

The cheat mode is now enabled.

Now, pick from this list:

wln Level completed
lose Level lost
darci Play as Officer D'arci
roper Play as Roper
boo Massive explosion
cctv Fluorescent graphics
world Music select
ambient [red] [green] [blue] Set ambient light
fade [#] Change fog fade level
crnkles Toggle crinkles
tehw [#] Warp to indicated point
tells Save waypoint on map
telr Return to waypoint

Also, try enabling the cheat mode, then instantly return to the game. Now hit these:

Semicolon Slow motion
R Explosive barrel
E Random vehicle
F12 Spawn weapons
Keypad 7 Select game effect
Keypad 5 Execute game effect / Stealth debug mode
[Toggle enemy view
] Toggle enemy view
P Toggle enemy view
F3 Exit game
L Create light
G Move forward by 10ft or onto ledge
Keypad 3 Orange fog
' Pause
W Rain ripples
> Smoke trails
F11 Toggle clouds

Q View car paths
J View co-ordinates grid
Ctrl View game statistics
I View pedestrian areas

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (DEMO) Activation

Load the game with the '+set console 1' command line parameter. During the game, hit '~' to display the console and enter one of these codes:

god God mode
notarget Invisible
weapontest All weapons
givemoretutorial .44 pistol
givesnupertutorial Sniper rifle
noclip No clipping mode
timescale .4 Slow-motion
spawn [item name] Spawn item
Item names:

item_weapon_assault_rifle
 item_weapon_pistol
 item_weapon_pistol2
 item_weapon_rockettauncher
 item_weapon_sniper_rifle
 item_weapon_shotgun
 item_ammunition_auto
 item_ammunition_rocket
 item_ammunition_shotgun
 item_ammunition_pistol
 item_ammunition_pistol2
 item_equip_armor
 item_equip_c4
 item_equip_flashpack
 item_equip_grenade
 item_equip_light_goggles
 m_nyc_ebum
 m_nyc_msknhead1

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT Interplay

To access the in-game movies, you have to edit the 'torment.ini' file by adding these lines under the [MOVIE] heading:

BISLOGO=1
 TSRLOGO=1
 OPENING=1
 SS_MSLAB=1
 SIGIL=1
 TIME=1

SS_PHARO=1
 SS_ADETH=1
 ALYBIRTH=1
 DEATH=1
 MAZE1=1
 CURSTD=1
 OUTLANDS=1
 BAATOR=1
 CARCERI=1
 CRETURN=1
 FORTRESS=1
 FORTDOOR=1
 ARRIV_IGN=1
 T1ENTER=1
 METEDR=1
 DRAGDN=1
 T1ABSORB=1
 FINALE=1
 CONFLAG=1
 T1DEATH=1
 RUNE=1

Gothere Level select
Glowflst Increased fire power
Gimmelumz Five additional lumz

MORTYR

Interplay
 Hit '-' to activate the console and type any of these codes:

Satan God mode
megaboss God mode
gimme all All weapons and items
.# # Skip to Level #

Level numbers, the 41First Steps:

- 01 Outer Citadel
- 30 Through the Citadel
- 10 Middle Castle
- 33 In the Middle of the Castle
- 11 The Cathedral
- 34 The Darker Cathedral
- 12 The Cemetery
- 13 The High Castle
- 14 The Castle Cathedral
- 17 The Factory
- 35 The Machine Park
- 07 The Train Station
- 08 U-Boat Bunker
- 32 U-Boat Pen

- 06 V2 Factory
- 09 City Ruins
- 24 The Duel
- 15 The Time Machine
- 02 The Future Time Machine
- 2B Time Machine Facility
- 05 Underground Channels
- 31 The Sewers
- 1B Kraftwerk
- 03 Droid Factory
- 19 Computing Center
- 04 City in the Clouds
- 16 The Spaceport
- 29 Docking Bay 94
- 23 The Flying Fortress

SEPTERRA CORE
Monolith Productions

Hit 'F12', type 'Imareaiweenle'.

You can now enter cheats:

- enemies** List enemy hit points
- sight** Show line of sight
- spy** Show debug numbers
- makethemstopnommie** Enemies stop attacking
- fps** Show framerate
- mapmaker** Show map

1602 A.D.

GT Interactive

Press 'Ctrl, Shift, Alt and W' during the game, type '2061' then hit 'Return'. After that, press A and 'Return' to activate the cheat mode. Try these codes:

- Shift + M** Extra money
- Shift + Z** Loads of bricks
- Shift + K** More cannons
- Shift + H** Bonus wood
- Gold** Piles of gold
- Fastgame** All buildings

You can use a text editor to edit the 'game.dat' file in the main directory. Find the line 'Volume: -750, 0, -5??' and amend it to 'Volume: -750, 0, -5B1'. Now load the game and during play type 'Columbus' to receive a yellow flag for \$10,000.

ODIUM

Topware Interactive

Press 'Shift' and 'F10', then type 'give me all' for all weapons and infinite lives.

RAYMAN 2

Ubi Soft

Press 'Esc' to bring up the main menu, then type these cheats:

Gimmelife Five additional lives

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 THURS 1.30PM-5.30PM



Neil Valentine here will answer any question you have. Possibly...

Email us for a quick response:
Tipszone@hotmail.com

DEAR KEITH

Caring, sharing Keith Pullin offers the solution to your gaming nightmares

TORMENTED SOUL

Q I'm trying to get into the maze secret area on *Planescape: Torment*, but I have no idea how to do it. Is it something to do with The Lady of Pain? Could I have a little help please?

Bill Ewan, Bristol

A You're on the right track actually. You won't reach this secret bit unless you seriously piss off The Lady of Pain. A good way to do this is to kill a lot of innocent people. However, the quickest way is to pray to her doll three times. Is that OK?

BASKET CASE

Q I've got a basketball game called *NBA Live 2000*, but I want to play better. Is it true there is a way to get power dunks? If you tell me I'll buy *PC ZONE* for the rest of my life.

Andrew Brown, Duxforth

A Oh, all right then. To get power dunks, type 'redrover' in lower case on the main menu. Now start the game as normal and let those dunks fly, or something. By the way, we've got a SWAT team watching your house to make sure you keep your promise. Oh yes.

FOOTBALL CRAZY

Q I want to know where Romario is in *FIFA 2000*. I've searched everywhere for him but just can't find him. This might sound weird, but I really want to see what he plays like. Can you help me please?

Bete Bebite, London

A Sure, all you have to do is scan the Brazilian national team or the Brazilian club Flamengo - he's number 11. Hope you like what you see...

TOMB FAILURE

Q I'm trying to find the secret in the Burial Chambers level of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, but I'm totally stumped. Where the hell is it? I've been through that stage with a line loothpick and I'm on the verge of giving up now. Please help before I kill myself!

David French, Boscombe

A Woah, easy tiger - it's dead simple really. Before you plummet down the slope near the beginning, leap up and pull yourself onto the ledge above. Walk along that passageway and the secret 14 is down there.

A TIME OF MADNESS

Q I'm playing the blitz mode on *Midtown Madness* and I would like to know if you can turn the timer off. Apparently there is and it's something to do with twisting in your seat. Can you confirm this?

Gary Tongue, via email

A Er, kind of... At the start of the race switch to inside view, now turn around to look out of the back window and press the view button again. That's it, so you were almost right.

HOPELESS CRUSADE

Q How do you pick the right grail when you make it past the three trials in *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade*? I

can't believe this game would finish with a simple case of trial and error - that would take forever. Come on spill the beans!

Rog Winner, via email

A All you have to do is match the grail in the room with the picture in the grail book you should have received with the game. You've got the book, haven't you?

DARK TIMES

Q I'm going through an adventure binge at the moment, but I'm stuck on *Alone In The Dark III*. The trouble is I don't know how to wake up Emily. I walk into the room and no matter what I try I can't rouse her. Please help, I'm baffled.

Lewis Thorpe, Runcorn

A Hmm. You probably need a bottle of ammonia. You can find that in the cell with the old guy after you've drunk the shrinking potion. Once you have it, go back into Emily's room and throw it against the door you came in through. She should wake up.

BEASTLY PROBLEM

Q *Nocturne* is killing me man. I've come across these werewolf dudes and, although I can kill them, I can't do it quick enough - and they leap in and virtually rip me to pieces. What can I do to make things easier?

Michael Avoriaz, Leeds

A Although ordinary bullets and the shotgun shells can kill werewolves, it's easier if you use the pistol with silver bullets. Also, when

you see one werewolf, watch out for others - they usually hunt in packs. And that's it. Good luck.

A BATTLE TOO FAR?

Q I've bought *Battlezone 2* and think it's utterly brilliant. However, I'm stuck on the Ground Zero level. The enemy come pouring out too quickly and I just can't seem to properly defend myself. Any tips?

Morgan Wells, Birmingham

A Yup, it can be seriously tricky this one. First things first - don't set up your base anywhere near the middle of the map - this is where the enemy tend to set up theirs. Once you've chosen your base location, assume the role of commander and establish extractors at each corner of your base as soon as you can. Defend these with turrets. With this defence in place you should be able to counter-attack their base.

WATCHING PAINT DRY

Q I've got a game called *Extreme Paintball*. I was wondering if there are any cheats to make it more interesting? Don't get me wrong, it's quite good fun, but I think there should be more to it.

John Burns, Glasgow

A Fair enough. Maybe you can try these little gems: to play as a Canadian Mounty, hold 'Ctrl, Alt and Shift' and then type "Aye! Yo mother was a mounty!" followed by return. Alternatively, hold the same key combination and type "dnclp" to walk through walls.

SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE

STRATEGY GUIDE

Andrew Wright has been a *SWAT* since his first day at school – or so his classmates said. So who better to run you through a few days in the life of an all-action cop?

★ REVIEWED PCZ #85 SCORE 89%



1 SUSPECTED SNIPER

The girl is harmless, so don't shoot her...

Thanks to its random mission structure, *SWAT 3* is no walkover, there's no definitive walkthrough either.

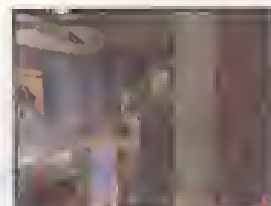
All we can do is give you some pointers as to how you should handle your men and plan each mission...

1 SUSPECTED SNIPER

On the first mission you have to dig out one suspect and deal with his girlfriend, both of whom can be almost anywhere in the house. Slack the element at the front door and pick the lock. Use the mirror to look around,

especially up the stairs. Now get one team to cover the stairs while the other searches and clears the ground floor rooms. Don't forget the cupboard under the stairs – have a team cover you if you decide to open it, just in case he's in there.

The girl is either downstairs, on the stairs or in the bathroom. Restrain and evacuate. The suspect could be under the sink in the kitchen, on the stairs, in an upstairs room, or in the attic. If he fires at you from hiding, fire warning shots and shout for compliance. You should be able to subdue him without bloodshed.



Sometimes just shouting back at him works well...

2 ARRESTING THE GETTS

The main problem here is the long hallway. Slack the element, pick the door lock, switch to dynamic mode and clear the living room. Have one team cover the hallway and the other

TOP TIPS

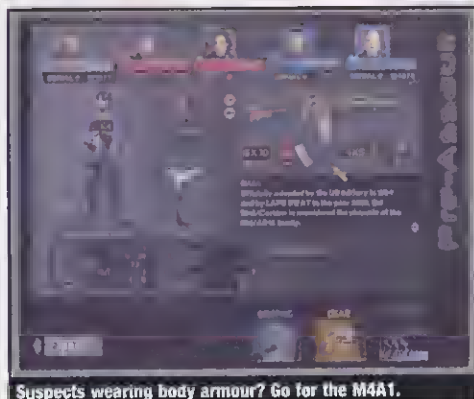
- ⊕ Keep your command 'tree' open constantly, at 800 x 600 and above. It's no real hindrance to vision and will minimise key presses during missions.
- ⊕ Listen to HQ's messages – police observers can often pinpoint the baddies for you. Memorise the layout and side number of each building you enter.
- ⊕ Stealth mode isn't always best as some criminals are more frightened when surprised.
- ⊕ Recover dropped or discovered weapons by moving close, pointing reticule and pressing 'use/open'.
- ⊕ Treat all civilians as unarmed unless they're

clearly a threat. Press '7' to demand compliance, then with your mouse pointing directly at them, press '1' (or '2' or '3' if you want a specific team to do it) followed by '8' to restrain or cuff them, and then '4' followed by '2' to evacuate.

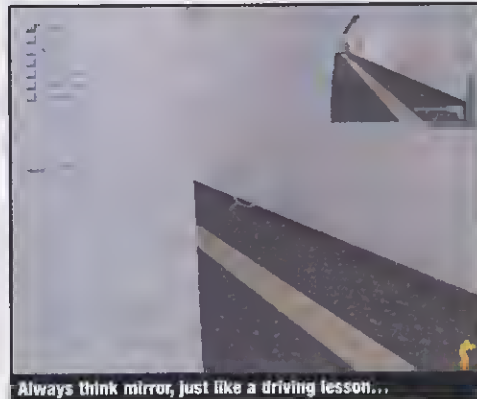
- ⊕ Warning shots will often persuade panicked hostages to submit. Moving in real close will persuade others. As a last resort, just throw gas at them. Cuff all hostages – even pregnant mums or whatever – they're much safer kneeling than running around like headless chickens...
- ⊕ When you find armed suspects, don't forget to give

the compromise alert (press '6') to your squad. They'll help out and be on their guard.

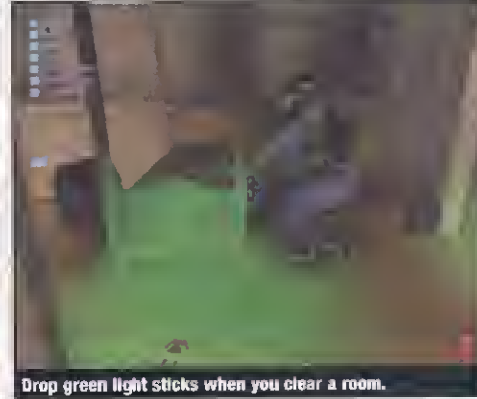
- ⊕ Try to hit suspects in non-vital areas (legs and arms) to drop them rather than kill them.
- ⊕ Don't worry too much about weapon choice. None of the missions require the silenced H&K and most will be fine with the default weapon unless you need extra range or penetration, at this point you should go for the M4A1.
- ⊕ If you score less than 75 for leadership, or have lost more than one man in a mission, reload that mission and play it again.



Suspects wearing body armour? Go for the M4A1.



Always think mirror, just like a driving lesson...



Drop green light sticks when you clear a room.

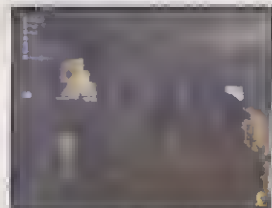
team cover the door to the left while you search.

Clear the house using one team up front, the other covering the rear. Search every room for weapons – don't forget to look under TVs and inside the garage basement (to enter, give one team the clear command when pointing at the entrance). Can't see very well? Try the light switches...

Young Getts usually has a weapon, but he doesn't really intend to use it, so give him half a chance. Getts' senior officer has a blinking device, which triggers a booby trap. C4 or your toolkit will sort it out, but keep well back.



Ⓜ It's dark in the second mission, so remember to use your flashlights.



Ⓜ Hitting the light switch also tends to help a bit.

3 HOSTAGE RESCUE - RIVER TIGRIS STORE

There are between three and seven well-armed suspects in the River Tigris store, but the hostage is wearing a hood, so is easily recognised. One or two bad guys might be in the shop, so go in quickly in dynamic mode, and make sure you shoot to kill. Totally clear the store and take the exit on the left behind the screen.

Cover each doorway before entry, using your mirror where possible. Move through the rooms one at a time and down the steps into the basement. Move with the entire element to provide extra cover. Use one team to restrain people and the other to cover, particularly when you rescue the hostage as there are likely to be more suspects nearby.



Ⓜ Expect action straight away in this mission – pot shots from inside mean you need to hurry.



Ⓜ Flashlights sort out the men from the boys.

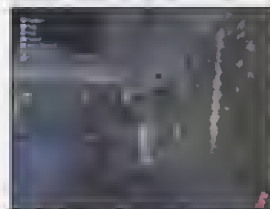
4 HOSTAGE RESCUE - THE FOREMAN'S HOME

This is the first mission you might have to replay more than once. The terrorists are well-armed and mean business. Take the default entry, get one team to cover the pool area and send the other up the steps and through the French windows (breach and clear). You go with them, then cover the other team as they climb the steps to join you.

There are three levels plus outside areas to clear and you can't afford to relax for a minute. The hostages are randomly placed and one or two extra suspects will often appear,

particularly outside. Just make sure you do a thorough search and use the time-honoured proper SWAT tactics (breach and clear rooms, use your mirror, cover exits and doors, etc).

And be warned, terrorists outside the house will shoot at you inside through curtains and blinds – and vice versa.



Ⓜ Get past the French windows and pool and you've a fair chance.



Ⓜ A good rule – don't shoot anything less than 4ft high...

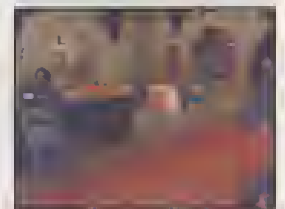
5 HOSTAGE RESCUE - ST DIMITRI'S CHURCH

Switch straight to dynamic mode and breach and clear the main entrance. It's best to clear the building from the top down, so order the element to clear the stairwell and then follow the lead officer upwards to the second floor. From the lounge other stairs lead up. Cover the other exits with one team while you ascend and clear the top floor with the other.

Ignore the hidden door leading down and instead return to the entry point. Make sure you cover the next internal door yourself, otherwise there can be several targets for one officer. This door opens into a worship area. It's big and holds several suspects plus a hidden door behind the pulpit.

Don't let your men separate, especially when restraining. Some of the hostages need

repeated compliance attempts and the security men can be troublesome. Try to force compliance verbally or by tiring a single warning shot. If they don't drop the weapon – or they tire at you – then you have no choice...



Ⓜ At least you can spot the hostages easily enough...

6 RAPID DEPLOYMENT-CONSTRUCTION SITE

Not a hard mission, but it's against the clock. Equip yourself with long-range weapons, such as the M4 or silenced H&K. Take default entrance and hit dynamic mode straight away.



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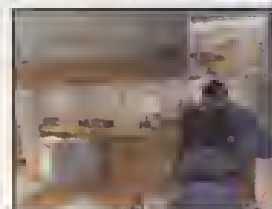


using the whole element to boost firepower.

The front office may be empty, but there is usually someone outside who'll fire through the supposedly bullet-proof screen. At least two men in the element should have penetrative weapons or ammo. The safety deposit vault has two cubicles - check for occupants by crouching down and looking for tell-tale signs, such as feet.



Behind you! That officer should have been covering the corridor...



And I thought banks had bullet-proof glass...

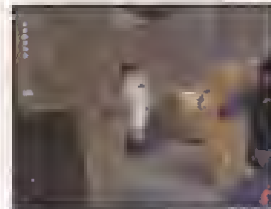
8 HOSTAGE RESCUE - TV STUDIO

Tough one this, with up to ten suspects, even more hostages and lots of ambushes. The M4A1 is an advantage. Take the default entrance, pick the lock and then turn left. Cover the doors before opening as you'll take fire straight away from the open area on the left. Cover the door at the end of the walkway with one team and clear the left with the other, but don't let them get too far from the walkway or they could get trapped and out-gunned.

Once you've reported in, breach the ON AIR door. Keep the element close together just inside. Once clear, head through the wooden panels to the TV

studio. There are several hostages here plus suspects, so make sure you enter with the full element. Watch out for suspects at the back.

Having cleared the stage - and reported everyone in - breach and clear the three rooms back in the corridor. Crouch down to look under the cubicle doors. Finally, take the stairs up and search the control room carefully, just in case there are any suspects left.



Many of the terrorists look like civilians, so be extra careful.

9 ARREST - PHOENIX NIGHTCLUB

An unrealistic mission where four or five bad guys fire handguns at you - despite having up to 13 rifles and sub-machine guns lying around. The hardest part is finding them all.

Pick the front door entry point, which opens directly into the public bar, switch to dynamic mode and give the breach and

10 ARREST - PHOENIX NIGHTCLUB



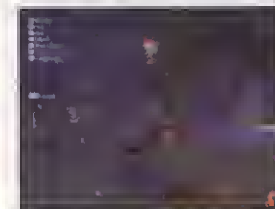
The righthand door leads to offices - and more guns...

clear command. Most of the suspects will make themselves known here, so make sure you back your element up yourself. Some cover is available, but watch out for cross-fire, especially from the DJ's position above the dance floor.

When quiet, breach and clear the toilets (left) and check each cubicle, but have one team cover the right side of the public area while you do so. Now head to the right through the door marked PRIVATE, using move and clear. Keep your element together and search for suspects thoroughly. Once you've cleared all the rooms and dealt with the suspects, you can start sweeping for weapons.



The righthand door leads to offices - and more guns.



The washrooms off to the left of the dance floor.

10 INFILTRATION - LAX CONTROL TOWER

Enter stealth mode and pick lock on alarm box and door to avoid the alarm. In the corridors use your mirror and keep the element together. Clear out the ground floor rooms before heading for the stairs marked HIGH. Plenty of confrontations occur on the stairs, so watch your element carefully and look out for activity

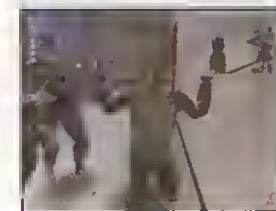
between the stair boards. Point to the stairs and give the search command. If an element spreads out too much, give the fall-in command and repeat.

As you find doors off the stairs, position one team to cover up the stairs and have the other clear that level with you. If you come across hostages, get up really close and order compliance. At the top of the stairs is the OPERATIONS area leading to the air traffic control room. On the balcony is the missile launcher, which has to be disarmed with your toolkit.

Now return to the stairs and descend to the KITTIFLAWK level. Cross the walkway and search the offices until you have completed the mission. Hostages and suspects can appear here, all mixed up. Because it's such a large building, make sure you report on suspects and hostages as you come across them. Backtracking can be frustrating.



Stairwells play a part in this level - slowly does it.



Neat camo, mate, but not indoors when everything's painted off-white...

11 INFILTRATION - CITY HALL

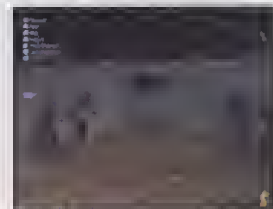
With only the top three floors and roof to worry about, this one's a piece of cake... if you remember your training. The suspects tend to move around while the hostages remain put, so it's fairly easy to know who to shoot. Use your mirror at every turn and your flashlight when there are shadows.

As usual, split into two teams, one covering the corridor, the other clearing the rooms. Just be prepared to reinforce either of them yourself. To get to the top floor, enter the law library and take the stairs up, but watch for suspects coming down. Continue clearing each room and securing the hostages until you get to the top floor. Go up to the roof yourself and then get the

Point at the gate and order the full element to breach and clear. Head straight down the track to the first door on the left. Assign one team to cover, the other to breach and clear. Disarm the launcher.

Leave by the same door, move to the next entrance on the left. Have a team cover the right, take the other along the fence and down the ramp. Disarm the second launcher when clear. Regroup and search the ditch, looking for a hidden tunnel to the third launcher. Use stealth mode and the mirror as you exit, but be prepared to take on more than one suspect.

Now you've saved the plane, search the rest of the site for any remaining suspects. Keep out of the open and use your flashlight in dark areas.



One or two suspects are in here with a launcher.



Use your toolkit to disarm the launcher quickly.

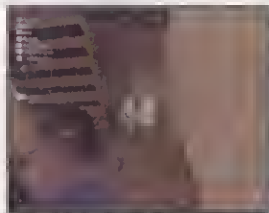
7 HOSTAGE RESCUE - BANK

Open the door by picking the lock and then fall-in your element. Turn on your flashlight, turn sharp right, second-last left, immediate left and then right to the door in the wall.

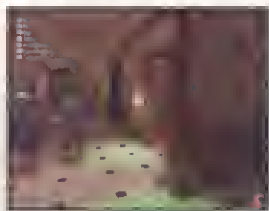
Don't expect many prisoners, as the suspects are aggressive and well-armed, but they come in dribs and drabs, so keep your element together for maximum firepower. If suspects appear behind the hostages, it'll be tough, as a dead hostage means a failed mission. If necessary have both teams cover the corridors and doorways and restrain the suspects and hostages yourself.

Switch to stealth mode, take it slowly and use your mirror, especially along corridors. You will occasionally get the chance to shout 'hands up' at suspects, but keep your cross hairs on them. Clear each room one at a time in dynamic mode,

element to follow. Order them to move and clear and then locate the bomb. Defuse it with your toolkit for another good day's work...



Ⓜ Make sure all your guns cover the stairs as you ascend.



Ⓜ Remember to drop light sticks if you clear areas yourself.

12 INFILTRATION - STORM DRAINS

This can be one of the hardest missions as the three levels look very similar. The only way to complete the mission is to search and clear each tunnel or room thoroughly. Don't worry about the time limit though, as it always seems long enough.

Use a flashlight in the dark areas, watching for bombs, hidden entrances and ambush positions. The bombs look like old-fashioned portable radios and emit a beeping noise when you're close. Disarm all seven with your toolkit.

Watch out for the shoulder-height walls on the lowest (third) level and crouch if necessary. Steer your way around the blockages, but listen for grunting noises from nearby suspects. They're dressed in orange fluorescent suits, so don't shoot the homeless civilian. The last room on the third level has a truck, inside which the suspects are making bombs. The mission

will end here if you have been thorough.



Ⓜ These old-fashioned radio sets are beeping bombs.

13 INFILTRATION - CONVENTION CENTRE

The final mission in the 'career' game is a massive blast-test where you're swamped by suspects and hostages running at you from all directions. It takes place in a two-storey convention centre with a basement. Enter in dynamic mode from the car park via the unlocked double doors.



Order the element to move and clear up the escalators to the second floor.

The important thing is not to be distracted by noise and running hostages. Work methodically, prioritising tasks.

Point your men at the suspects and restrain the hostages yourself – they're safer on their knees. There are at least three suspects dressed as waiters. Others are dressed in civilian clothes or in combat gear and

they can approach from any direction, especially the stairs and escalators.

Search the meeting rooms using one team and yourself, the other team should remain covering. Each room may have several hostages and two or three gunmen. Remember, you're trying to locate and defuse a bomb in a suitcase as well as rescue important hostages. It can be anywhere in the building and while there are many red herrings, only the real bomb bleeps. Make sure every room is cleared and searched – mark them with green sticks while your element covers.

Next, search the first floor and then the basement, but stay wary of attacks from unexpected directions and dark areas. The suspects have a habit of ganging up in this mission so keep your element together for maximum firepower. [E2]



Orange suits and gas masks identify the suspects.

MISSION PACK

In single mission mode you can access three further scenarios – one in the Convention Centre, another in a penthouse suite and the third in a hotel. And when that rumoured multiplayer add-on comes out later this year there may even be a few more...



Police work is police work – kill unarmed suspects, manhandle poor innocent hostages, and on time-and-a-half, too.

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FINAL FANTASY VIII

WALKTHROUGH — PART ONE

Martin Korda dons his battle gear, junctions his GFs and sets out to learn some magic tricks in the first part of our *Final Fantasy VIII* walkthrough

REVIEWED PCZ #87 SCORE 83%



The briefing before the Dallet mission.



Laguna's confused at the start of the second Laguna dream.



Who's the mystery girl that Squall dances with? You'll find out later.

One of the largest PC games around, *Final Fantasy VIII* has a wealth of gameplay and an epic storyline. This month we take you through the first half of the game, but fear not, we will be bringing you the second part next month.

BALAMB GARDEN

Wake up and talk to the doc. Quistis arrives. Follow her as you talk. After the class, meet Quistis at the front gate. Help the girl out on the way. Talk to the people near

you, then meet Quistis at the front gate by going down the screen. Speak with Quistis and head for the Fire Cavern. Go to the end of the cavern and fight Ifrit. Return to Balamb Garden. Go to your room and change into your uniform. Go to the lobby and meet Quistis. Head to Balamb City. Go to the harbour and get on the boat.

DOLLET

Follow Seifer, and scout when he tells you to. Go to the top right of

the screen and fight the guards. Follow Seifer to the Communications Tower. You bump into Selphie. Jump off the cliff and follow Seifer. You will now have to

fight Biggs, Wedge and the machine. Run back to the ship before your time runs out. When you've escaped, go back to Balamb Garden.

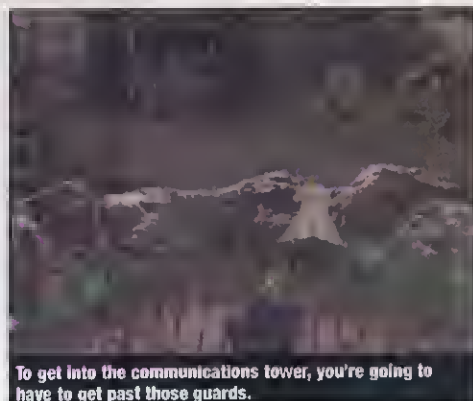
BALAMB GARDEN

Head for the lobby. Talk to everyone there, then take the elevator to the second floor after the announcement. Talk with the students who are waiting. After the ceremony, talk with Cid. Return to your room and change.

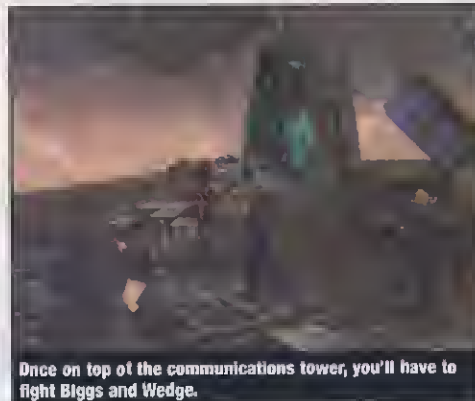
Talk to Quistis on the balcony. Change and go to the training centre. Head left and talk to Quistis. Leave the training centre and fight the boss on your way out. Go back to your room and sleep. Wake up and go to the front gate. Talk to Cid and go to the Balamb City train station. Get on the train and go into the room.

FIRST LAGUNA DREAM

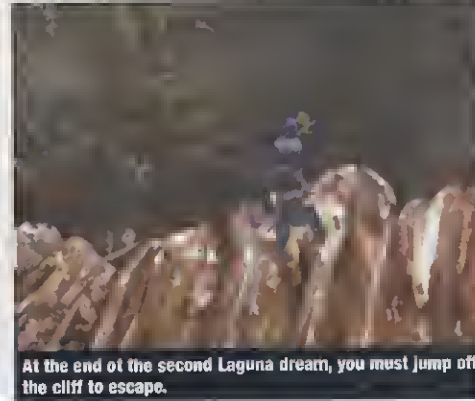
You are Laguna and his friends. Follow the path, get into the car and you'll arrive at Deling City. Go right, to the hotel. Walk down



To get into the communications tower, you're going to have to get past those guards.

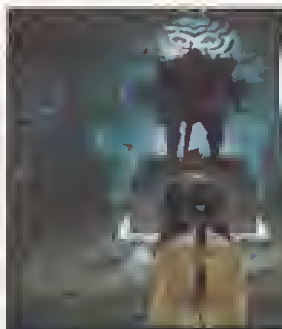


Once on top of the communications tower, you'll have to fight Biggs and Wedge.

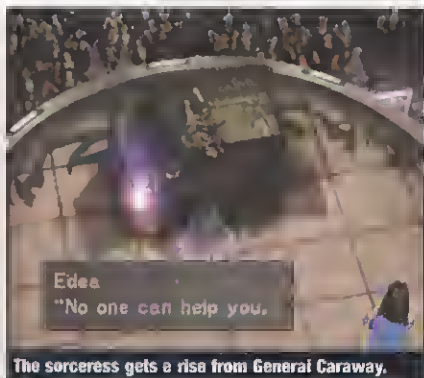
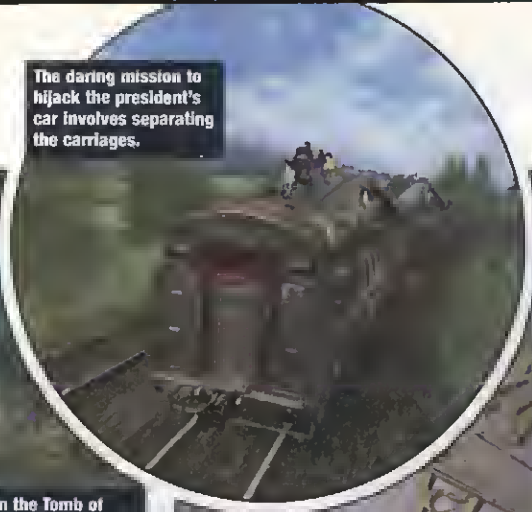


At the end of the second Laguna dream, you must jump off the cliff to escape.

The daring mission to hijack the president's car involves separating the carriages.

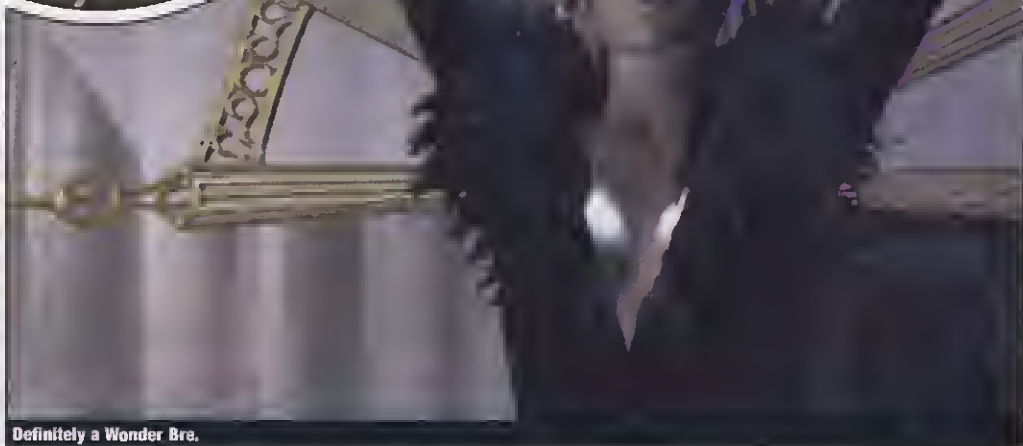


Defeat the statue and his brother in the Tomb of the Unknown King, to gain the Brother's GF.



Edea
"No one can help you."

The sorceress gets a rise from General Caraway.



Definitely a Wonder Bra.

the stairs and ask for a seat from the waitress. You meet Julia. Go to her room via the reception desk. You wake up.

TIMBER

Get off here and answer the man with the 'Owl' reply. Follow him and meet Rinoa. Talk to everyone else and then listen to the plan. Go to Rinoa's room and pick up the magazine. Tell Wafts you're ready and follow the instructions during the mission. When this mission is complete, talk to Rinoa and you will enter the president's carriage. Fight the creature. After Wafts tells you his new plan, tell him you are ready. In Timber, head right and talk to the people there. Go next door, speak to the woman, head upstairs and look out of the window. Go to Timber Maniacs, look around and leave. Go right and speak to the people there. Head for the pub. Speak to

the man slouched at the door, and offer him his card back. Go left and up. Walk to the train station, get Zone's tickets, jump on the train and make sure you get off at the next stop. Head for the forest between the cliffs. You fall asleep.

SECOND LAGUNA DREAM

You are Laguna and his friends. Head left and across the bridge, right and then down the ladder. After this, walk forward. Pick up the key in the first cave. Go up and you'll find a detonator. Press the switches and then follow the stairs and the bridge to the save point. Go up and jump off the cliff. You wake up.

GALBADIA GARDEN

Go up and left to Galbadia Garden. Walk through the gate and up two flights of stairs to arrive at the

reception. Talk with everyone. Go to the front gate and speak with Fujin and Rajin. Move to the front gate and speak to Quistis. Take the train to Deling City.

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN KING

Get off the train and follow the escalators. Head down the main street and get on the bus, then get off at Caraway's Mansion. Speak to the guard. On the World Map, go northeast to get to the Tomb. After entering the Tomb, note the ID number on the sword. Head toward and right three times and then forward to get to the statue, which you must fight. Walk around the tomb until you find the two levers, which you must tamper with (they are in separate locations). From the entrance of the Tomb, go straight and fight the brothers. Return to Deling City.

DELING CITY

Go right and get on the bus for Caraway's Mansion. Tell the guard the ID code from the sword in the Tomb. Follow the guard and talk to people. Follow the general, then go back to the mansion. Talk with everyone and follow them, then follow the general. As Quistis, return to the mansion. As Rinoa, go down the manhole, then left, picking up the mag on the way. Go up the ladder and climb the crate and building. Get a glass from the shelf and put it in the statue's hand. Head down the stairs and ladder, then jump on the wheel. As Squall, go the same way as Rinoa, and rescue her. As Quistis, get out of the tunnels. Fight Seifer and the sorceress to finish the first CD.

THIRD LAGUNA DREAM

You are Laguna. Talk to Ellone and follow her. Go to the pub and talk

to Raine. Kiros will join up with you. Explore, patrol and protect the town. Go up the stairs in the pub. Listen to Ellone and Raine's conversation. Go back to your house (it's next door to this one).

D-DISTRICT PRISON

You are Quistis and her group in prison. Talk to everyone. After briefly being Squall, you're back to being Quistis again. Moomba arrives. You are Squall. After Seifer leaves, answer the guard with the 'lie' reply. You are Zell. Talk with everyone, then go to the eighth floor. Fight the guards, go back to the cell and return the weapons. Fight Biggs and Wedge. Alarm sounds, so get to the 12th floor as quickly as you can. On your way to the 12th floor, examine each floor for items as you go. Moomba takes you to Squall. You are Squall. Turn right

you'll be back

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← and head for the door. Use the red button on the control panel. Help Zell. After Irvine and Rinoa turn up, head downstairs. When you get to the top, head down with the other group. You are Squall. Go up, then up and right until you are outside. Take Irvine and his lot up as well. Go to the bridge and cross it. When Squall is left dangling, move him towards the bridge. Use the cars to try and escape. Catch the train with Squall and co.

GALBADIA MISSILE BASE

Go to the missile base, by going over the bridge and heading left. At the base, head left and enter the first building. If you go to the door, you'll get a card, so use it. Saunter past the guard and go down the stairs. Go down the screen. Speak with the soldiers. Go back in and speak to the man

by the door. Go through it. Speak to the guard and tell him, "To go on ahead." Speak to the guards outside, and then go back in and head upstairs. Speak with the guard. Go into the room, press the buttons on the control panel and then leave. Convince them that they're imagining things. Go down the stairs. Go to the door and then follow the guard. Talk to the stationary guard and then push the missile to its correct position. Now sabotage the launch sequence and set the Error Ratio to its maximum level. Go to the controls room (bottom right of the control panels). Set the timer to 20 minutes. Go back out of the first door through which you entered the building.

BALAMB GARDEN

You are Squall. Go into the Garden. Talk to the man at the gate. Find Headmaster Cid. Walk around, talk

GUARDIAN FORCES

Without these guys, gals and ghouls, trying to survive in *FFVIII* would be about as easy as taking on Mike Tyson with both of your arms tied behind your back. Here's a quick guide to six of the major ones from the first half of the game, and what they're all about



SHIVA

Shiva gets her enemies with an ice attack, which is particularly effective against any fire-resistant enemies you may come up against, in particular her opposing GF Ifrit.



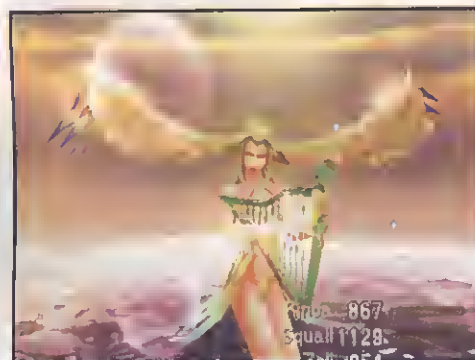
QUEZACOTL

With a name that sounds like someone cleaning their nasal passage, Quezacotl fires an electrical charge at his opponents, which does greatest damage against mechanical enemies and the GF Leviathan.



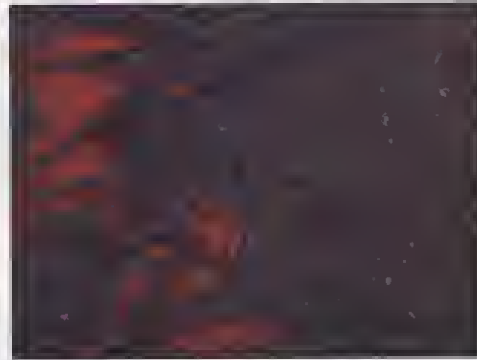
IFRIT

Possessing one of the most spectacular GF attack sequences, Ifrit hurts a huge flaming ball at his enemies. Use him in snowy areas where your enemies will be less resistant to his attacks.



SIREN

Siren is not really a GF who causes great amounts of damage to anyone, she should generally be used in order to silence your opponents. This will help in preventing them from making certain types of attacks against you.



DIABLOS

If you can defeat him, after releasing him from the cursed lamp, he will be one of your most effective GFs. Throwing a gravitational ball at his toes, Diablos can cause huge amounts of damage to anyone who gets in his way.



BROTHERS

Get this one from the Tomb of the Unknown King. The smaller of the two brothers helps push the larger one (who is carrying the ground on which the opponent is standing on) into the air. He then hurts it back to earth at a great speed.

to everyone and they'll give you some useful items. When you meet Xu, follow her, talk to her and then follow her again to the lift where you'll find Cid. Talk to him. Go down in the lift. Check the buttons and hatch. Go down the ladder and through the hatch that you come across. Move down the tunnel until you get to the ladder, head down it and walk through the door. Open the valve and head outside, where you'll see a hole. Now move down the ladder and up another one. Investigate the control panel. Inspect the green light and then progress down the ladder. Next to the save point is a lever which opens a door. Walk through it, fight, go through the door and down the ladder. Go back to the lift. Head out of the lift, down the hall and out the door at the end. Return inside and talk to Cid. You're in your bed. Go to the lobby and follow the instructions to find Norg. Now go back up in the lift. Go to the infirmary and talk to Cid. Go to the lobby and speak to Xu, then go to the deck on the second floor. After speaking to Cid, leave and speak to Ellone in the library. After speaking to Zell, leave the room and speak to Cid when he has finished talking. Go to the second floor and head for the deck.

FISHERMAN'S HORIZON

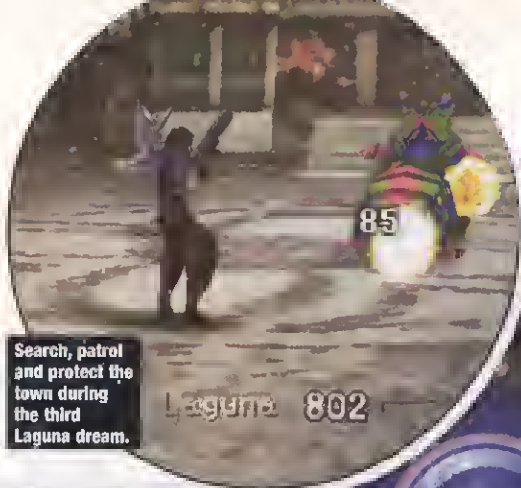
Talk to the fisherman on the dock. Talk to the man at the top of the stairs and then go back down. Talk to everyone. Go to the Mayor's house and go upstairs to speak to him. Return to the Garden and follow the Mayor. Listen in at the first house on your left, and get the magazine from upstairs. Head for the station. Listen carefully to conversations, then assist the elderly man. Exit the train station and go to the pier. Speak to everyone around. Return to the Garden. Find Selphie and try to cheer her up. Go to the concert, and then meet Quistis when necessary. Now go to Balamb City.

BALAMB CITY

Speak to the guards at Balamb Hotel and then head off to the docks and speak with everyone there. Stop off at Zell's house on your way to the train station and, after conversing with everyone there, go to the docks and again speak to everyone. Go back to the hotel and fight Rajin. Now head for Trabia Garden.

TRABIA GARDEN

Follow Selphie into the garden. Follow her when she starts



Search, patrol and protect the town during the third Laguna dream.

running as well.

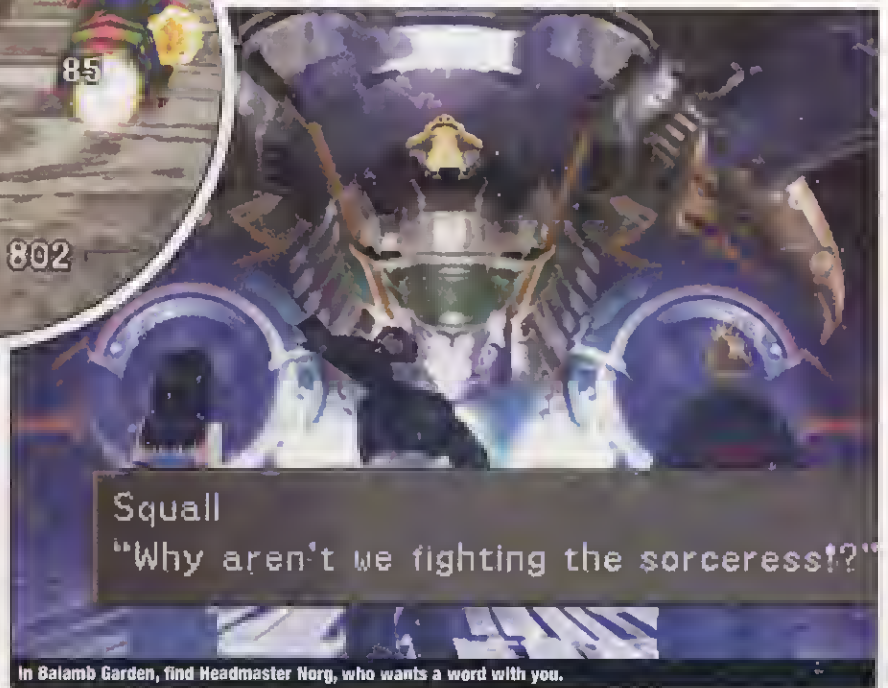
Talk to her. Head for the basketball court. After speaking with people, Squall gets lost in his thoughts. Follow the path and go down the stairs. Inspect the children and then follow Irvine, talk with everyone and finally to Rinoa.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE GARDENS

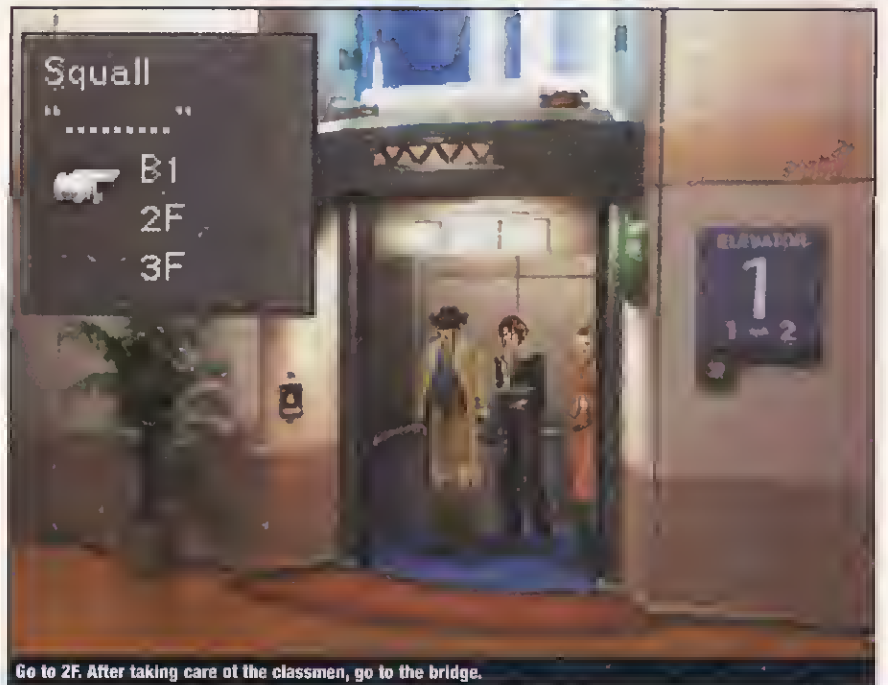
Go to the bridge and speak with Xu. Fly to the orphanage, encountering another garden along the way. Talk to everyone in classroom 2F. Head for Quad and speak with Rinoa and Zell. When you are Zell, turn left at the Quad. You will need to rescue Rinoa. Head for the hall and then the front gate with Squall. Speak to him. As Zell, save Rinoa. As Squall, go to classroom 2F. After taking care of the classmen, go to the bridge and talk to everyone there. Go to the lift and go down. Speak to the girl nearby. Find another way round after the confrontation with the soldier, and press the button for the emergency exit. Fight off the soldier. Rescue Rinoa, run to the left, speak to her and urge her to leave with you.

GALBADIA GARDEN

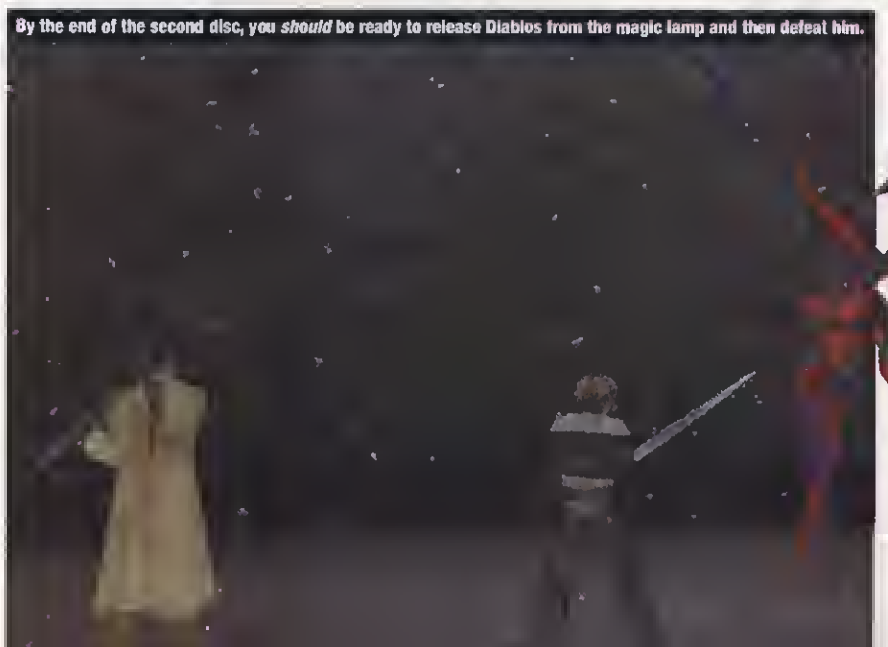
Talk to everyone. Go right twice and then up the stairs. Speak to Fujin and Rajin and go left, then right to get a key. Go left and unlock the door. Go to the far end of the rink and through the door. Talk to the man near the rink who will give you another card. Go out of the door here and unlock the next one. Keep going up the stairs until you find a locked door. Unlock it. Find the wall and jump over to the track. Go to the main lobby. Find a girl nearby (go left from the save point, where there should be a door on the left) who will give you another key. Now head for the lift, unlock it and head upwards. Fight any enemies you find there, and then head down in the lift. Find Rinoa and fight some more. When you've won, you will have completed the second disc. []



In Balamb Garden, find Headmaster Norg, who wants a word with you.



Go to 2F. After taking care of the classmen, go to the bridge.



By the end of the second disc, you should be ready to release Diablos from the magic lamp and then defeat him.

crunching. In which case, you're going to need a card with a bit more power. The lower end Voodoo cards, now retailing at around the £50 to £60, are great value. If you want to blow your socks off, our favourite card at present is the awesome Guillemot 30 Prophet DDR-OVI, powered by the NVIDIA GeForce 256 chipset and 32Mb of 6ns DDR SGRAM. Pow!

DIRECT PEST (AGAIN)

Q Could you please help? I've just installed *DirectX* and now I get error messages every time I try to load applications: General Protection Fault mgapdx64.drv and vxd. I can't find an uninstall for *DirectX* and Microsoft will not help as it's free software. I tried reinstalling the relevant programs and I tried installing *DirectX 6.1*, but it will not have it and just gives me errors such as 'DirectX setup error 14'.

Lee

A *DirectX* can be a very funny beast, and we tend to hold back on the updates until we really need them. This gives Microsoft and the video card manufacturers time to iron all the bugs out. *DirectX 7.x* has new functionality for all those lovely features on the latest video cards (eg GeForce 256), and if you don't have one, it's often little more than a wasted download and a lot of hassle. Microsoft has a whole subsite devoted to *DirectX* at www.microsoft.com/directx and if you look in the FAQ section, they have full details on how to remove *DirectX*.

The mgapdx64.drv file looks like a driver for one of the Matrox video boards, so we're assuming you have a Matrox card inside your machine. In which case, the best thing you can do is to head off to the Matrox site at www.matrox.com and download the latest drivers. Give them a whirl, and if you still have a problem, drop tech support an email - we've

found them to be both prompt and helpful.

SMALL SCREEN

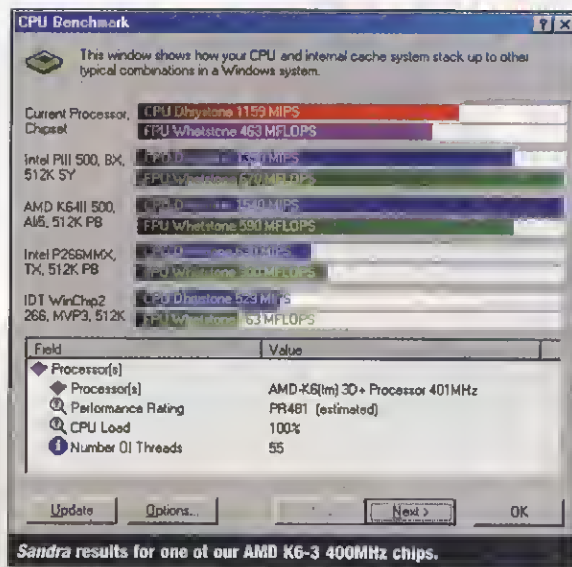
Q I have recently purchased a Voodoo3 2000 AGP. When I started to use it, I found that it wouldn't go higher than 600x480, where my old S3 Virge 030 card went up to 800x600 (my old 15inch Tating SVGA monitor won't support anything higher than this anyway). My machine is an AMO K6-3 333MHz, 96Mb RAM, with *DirectX 7a* and the latest drivers from the 3dfx website. The display panel just has 'Default monitor on Voodoo3 2000' and shows it as having 32-bit colour at 600x480. How can I kick it into high res?

Thomas Onley, Rossendale

A You need to tell Windows what monitor you are using. Without this information, it will configure your video card to use a basic setting - 640x480 at a suitably low refresh rate. The monitor you use is probably not in the standard Microsoft listings, so you'll have to play about with some of the others monitors until you can find one that works. We had exactly the same problem you mention with an unbranded monitor, and just set it to a few of the base model Hitachi monitors until we found one that had a good enough refresh. Sounds a bit of a bodge, but it works a treat. As your monitor can only go to 800x600 we'd recommend only trying the lower end of 14 and 15inch model drivers. The larger screens will have much higher refresh rates which will be far too high for your monitor and may damage it.

CURIOUS BIOS

Q I have an AGP-ALI Motherboard with Aladdin V Chipset and Award Software BIOS. I've recently tried to upgrade from an AMO K6-2 300MHz to a K6-2 450MHz. However, the BIOS screen doesn't seem to recognise anything above 400MHz - even



Sandra results for one of our AMD K6-3 400MHz chips.

though the manual details jump settings up to 500MHz. I've tried the manufacturer's website and Award's site in search of a BIOS flash upgrade, but have had no luck. Do you have any suggestions on how I can get my board to recognise my new chip? I'm close to copping out and buying a new motherboard.

Andrew Watson

A We'll assume that you've triple-checked the jumper settings you're using for the new processor. If my memory serves me well, the K6-2 450MHz came with a 100MHz bus and a 4.5 multiplier (during its life, the K6-2 300MHz arrived with both 100MHz x3 and 66MHz x4.5). Beyond that, it depends how much the board is recognising the CPU. If your machine refused to reboot with the new chip, then you're going to have to find a new BIOS for it, or get a new motherboard.

If the machine is rebooting happily, but printing the incorrect CPU speed at start-up, you could

well be OK - it's just the BIOS reporting the wrong information and it happens all the time. You can check this from within Windows by using something like Sandra to check your machine's performance. See www.sisoftware.demon.co.uk/sandra for more details.

PC PARANOIA

Q Am I being paranoid? Is it just me that has problems with every single PC purchase? For about two months now, my computer has frozen every other time I have used it. It usually happens within the first five minutes of booting up, regardless of whether I'm in Windows, running a game, or somewhere online. I have an AMD K6-III 450 with 176Mb RAM, a Voodoo3 3000 AGP card on a P5VP-A+ motherboard running Windows 98.

According to the *DirectX* diagnostics, everything is 'certified' and there are no problems - likewise, according to the device manager, there are no conflicts. The only thing that has

changed in my computer is the introduction of a new 56K PCI modem (which for some reason has dropped its connections to 31,200bps). Would changing this to USB sort out the problem?

Scott Sloan

A Random lockups can be a right pain. And there can be so many causes. By the sounds of things, you're quite familiar with the guts of your PC, so check the voltages for your CPU. AMD has a habit of changing the voltage settings on seemingly identical processors. An old Wandybox™ used to play up at the strangest times, until we discovered that K6-3 400MHz was in fact an early model and thus required 2.4V rather than the 2.2V of more recent versions. After that, the crashes stopped - instantly.

Or check the cables in your machine aren't restricting the airflow, especially near the CPU and Voodoo card. The Voodoo3 is a monster card and pumps out a lot of heat. Also check you have the latest BIOS for your motherboard - a lot of manufacturers have released updates to cure AGP teething troubles.

Onto your modem problem. By the sounds of things, you could be dialling the wrong number. If your modem is V.90, then you need to dial a V.90 line. If you're dialling a 56Kflex line, or an X2 line (two competing 56K standards before V.90 was finalised), your modem will be unable to negotiate the proper speed and will drop back in steps until it finds one that it recognises and can talk to. 31,200 is generally the speed you'll end up with if you're using a 'pure' V.90 modem to access one of the older communication standards. ☑



SECRET SOFTWARE

Q I've just been re-reading your article, Set Up A Home Network, from *PCZ* #84. I noticed that you were unable to find the website for Netgear. I've found it for you: netgear.baynetworks.com. The site has some useful information for networking and also details a couple of starter kits that Netgear produce. One of these kits would be perfect for the sort of home network detailed in your article. It's the FB104 100Mbps Fast Ethernet Kit, and comes complete with two PCI dual speed network cards, a four-port 100Mbps hub, two

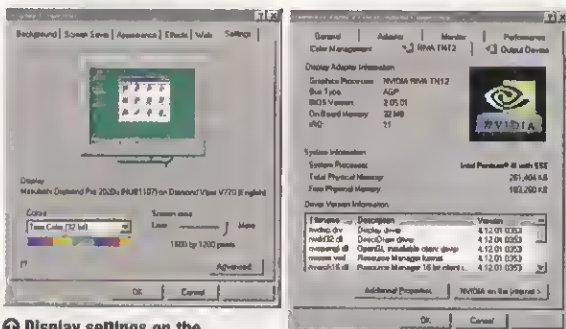
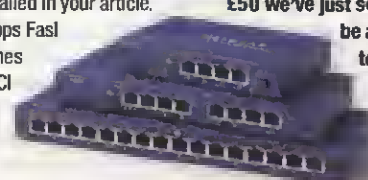
25ft network cables and a "How To" guide. Dabs Direct at www.dabs.co.uk has these kits at £64 + VAT - with free p&p if you order over the Web - it seems like a good deal to me.

Hope this has been of use!

Jim Williams

A Netgear produce some worthy kit at seriously low prices. With the £50 we've just sent you, you should be able to treat yourself to some of it. Cheers!

Netgear's FE104 hub is core to the FB104 network starter kit.



Display settings on the latest Wandybox™.

WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let *PC ZONE* ramraid their premises for you and snatch some answers...

ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing, then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog - if you have a techie problem, write to Gear Wandy (page 126).

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.



D Clegg is tormented by *Planescape*.

amounts to: "Sod you - but we have your money and that is that."

I could not believe that the game was released with a known fault. How can this still be going on? Why do we stand for it? If it was any other type of product, there would be hell to pay but we, the gaming fraternity of Great Britain, just smile and let them get away with it, yet again.

D Clegg

A We understand your anger - we all know bugs are the biggest downfall of PC games, other than crap gameplay. Virgin, the distributor of the game in the UK, offered the following explanation for this particular bug: "It's clear that we make every effort to resolve people's problems. We also have extensive testing departments within our companies, but sometimes some bugs appear on particular computer set-ups that go unnoticed until release. We then make every effort to correct the problem with a patch, which we've successfully done in this instance." Check out the latest patch (version 1.1) on last month's (April) cover CD or get it from www.interplay.com.

"We need to reiterate that although it was a known problem it was confined to certain PC set-ups, and this therefore was not a case of a game shipped early with a blatant disregard for the customer," offered Virgin. "Interplay wants to be recognised for creating high quality role-playing games and brand is very important to us - we would not dilute this by cutting corners."

Mmm... while we appreciate that Interplay wants to be recognised for producing "high quality role-playing games" (which it does incidentally) when something like this slips through the testing procedure, it merely hacks off punters, no matter how small and "confined" the problem may be. After all, once you've paid your money at the counter, who gives a damn what the reason is for it not working? Until bug testing procedures are tightened up, Watchdog will continue to highlight the worst offenders.

TECH HITCHES

Q I am writing to you about the poor service of Tech Direct.

YOUR DETAILS PLEASE...

If you are writing in to complain about a product, whether it is a ropey piece of software or a shoddy PC, please furnish us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can resolve your problems much quicker.

BUG TORMENT

Q I am about to relate a more than familiar story to you - anyone who owns a PC will know this one off by heart. I bought *Planescape: Torment* from Black Isle, installed it on my system and was delighted with the game - brilliant graphics, fantastic sound, wonderful storyline, etc.

After a while though, I noticed that the game was not running as smoothly as it did at first and there was a marked increase in disc access. This then became out and out thrashing of the hard drive and any fight scenes just ground to a halt.

I looked at my system, defragged the hard drive, reset my swap file and checked my other hardware/software set-ups. I am a computer programmer and builder, so I am familiar with most aspects of computing, but I could not sort the problem out.

So I decided to ring the technical helpline. I was given the run around by the 'Help Wizard' and was told the wrong answer. Eventually, I spoke to a customer sales person and was told (and I quote): "Yes, this is a known fault with this game." No apology, no excuse - just an admission, which basically

LACK OF GAMEPLAY?

Q After reading the Gameplay catalogue and noticing its promises of quick delivery and low prices, I thought I'd give it a go. I ordered three games on December 15, within the time limit for delivery before Christmas. I received one game a week after Christmas, but I'm still waiting for *Half-Life* and *Opposing Force*.

The company's phones are always engaged, so I emailed the customer feedback and customer service addresses at Gameplay on January 18. No reply as of yet. I have done everything I can think of and Gameplay is seriously beginning to wind me up.

Is there any way you can find out what's going on?

Duncan Cox

A We were disappointed to hear about the troubles you've had getting your hands on your goods - as you probably read in the last Issue of *PC ZONE*, we reckon mail order/online shopping is the way to go when purchasing software. Off we toddled to Gameplay and asked them how your order managed to slip through its usually efficient net. "Every mail order company is reliant upon third parties to fulfil the final part of its promise, ie the delivery, and when dealing with over 400,000 customers, things occasionally can and do go wrong," offered Oylan Wilk, the director of Gameplay.

"Usually though, all problems can be solved very quickly once our customer care team are aware of it."

Having looked into the history of your order, Duncan, Gameplay says that it was actually processed on time and was dispatched complete by first-class post on the same day they received it (December 15 1999).

"However, one of these parcels went astray in the post," explained Wilk, "and did not reach him - and the other arrived very late. Unhappily, we did not hear from Mr Cox until the middle of January, by which time Royal Mail was unable to trace

the second parcel and it was a few days before we had stock available of the missing games in order to redespach them. I am pleased to report, however, that Mr Cox received both missing games in early February and is now enjoying them."

Gameplay states that your case is not representative of its normal level of service and because of the problems you've experienced, it has decided to refund you in full for the two missing games.

"I hope that this gesture will encourage Duncan to try our service again in the future and give us a second chance," offered Wilk.

"I signed to refuse the product and sent it back. Then (as if that wasn't bad enough) I received my credit card statement and found the money for the product was taken from my account"

GLYNN BANKS' ONLINE SHOPPING DISASTER

COMING NEXT ISSUE DEUS EX REVIEW



We're not promising anything (we've had our fingers burnt too many times), but we reckon that *Deus Ex* is going to turn up for review next month. We spoke to Warren Spector and the game is finished – it's just a case of tweaking it to perfection. Keep those fingers crossed.

HONEST REVIEWS
With our new tight scoring system and policy of only reviewing finished games, *PC ZONE* is the only place to come to for comprehensive and honest reviews: As well as *Deus Ex* we're going to have *Starlancer*, *Allegiance*, *C&C: Firestorm* and *Need For Speed: Porsche 2000* (the software arrived a day too late to include in this issue). Rumour has it that *Daikatana* (remember that name?) could be on its way as well. Ion Storm has booked its holiday and it's not rescheduling. The unofficial word is that the software has gone 'bronze', which means that Ion Storm has finished, but Eidos need to approve the software before it is declared 'gold'. Oh, and you can forget about *Vampire* for the time being. We were promised review code for the third month running, only to be disappointed again. We reckon it's going to be a couple of months now – at least. Still, better a perfect finished copy than a bugged pre-release.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS
The Sims. It's a fantastic game, but it's not that easy to raise the model family. We know how and we're willing to share our secrets with you next month. So forget about burning your kitchen down in front of your dinner guests and getting slapped for an out-of-place tickle. Pretty soon you'll be able to move into the great big mansion down the road that you've had your eyes on for the past couple of months. And, if you're still having trouble with the epic *Final Fantasy VIII*, you'll be pleased to hear that we've got the second and final part of the walkthrough ready for your perusal.

ALL THE LATEST DEMOS
As usual, our CD will be packed with the latest demos, patches and add-ons for your favourite games. Forget about the Internet – browse your way through more than 600Mb worth of free goodies.

ON SALE THURSDAY MAY 4



A frustrated *Dungeon Keeper* player?

I placed an order for a 3dfx Voodoo3 3000 graphics card for my son at Christmas. After hearing that the product would not arrive until January 10, I sent an email to cancel the order.

The order was placed on 10 December, and cancelled on the December 29, (yes, that's right, my son got nothing for Christmas). After not receiving a confirmation email, I assumed that the order had been cancelled. In the meantime, I purchased a Voodoo3 from good old PC World. Imagine my surprise then when on January 13, a parcel was delivered to my door, and it was a Voodoo3 from Tech Direct!

I signed to refuse the product and sent it back with the courier. Then (as if that wasn't already bad enough) I received my credit card statement and found that the money for the product was taken from my account on December 16. I have since sent two more emails and a letter to the company, but I've received nothing but an invoice. Please could you help me as I don't have the product and don't want it either!

Glynn Banks

A More online shopping madness... off we trotted to Tech Direct to find out why there had been such a balls-up. "I have looked into the matter of Mr Banks' order and I am sorry to say that the level of service received by Mr Banks did fall short of the level we try to offer our customers," explained Jim Dale, Tech Direct's customer services manager. "Just to explain the circumstances behind the delay of the order, the problems have, in the most part, been caused by the fact that the company has recently changed its computer system. This has led to unforeseen problems and I am sorry that in the short term it has also led to some measure of disruption to our normal business and service flow."

Tech Direct says it is working to resolve the difficulties and to restore the level of service "we pride ourselves on" – it anticipates that the problems should be

rectified by the time you read this. As for the credit card bill, Jim told us: "I am pleased to say that Mr Banks' credit card was refunded for the full amount when we received the goods back from Amtrak on January 18."

Fair enough, but if anyone has any subsequent problems with the company, be sure to let Watchdog know.

DOWN IN THE DUNGEONS

A I wish to bring to your attention an issue regarding technical support at Bullfrog. I installed *Dungeon Keeper 2*, but an error message came up. I have a K7 Athlon 500, 128Mb RAM and a Creative Blaster TNT2 Ultra. I phoned Bullfrog and eventually got through to tech support. The technician told me to uninstall my Creative drivers and download/install nVIDIA's own detonator drivers.

After downloading, the drivers wouldn't install – continually aborting the installation and re-booting my PC in Low Res mode leaving me to reinstall my Creative drivers. My second call to the same technician ended with him saying that nothing could be done and to take the game back to the shop for a refund!

Unwilling to give up, I called Bullfrog a third time. I was put through to a different technician and was on the phone for one and a half hours trying to solve the problem at national call rates! In the end, I still got the same error message! I rang one more time and got through to a third technician. He asked me straight away to bring up the 'close program' screen with 'Ctrl/Alt/Delete' and asked if I had a program called AMON 32.

I did, and was asked to delete this. And the game worked! The technician was surprised that the others didn't ask about AMON 32 (which incidentally is installed with Cable & Wireless Internet software), as this had caused similar problems with *C&C: Tiberian Sun*.

I rang to complain to customer services that I had incurred two hours of peak rate phone calls and initially was told to just return my game. I enquired about compensation but to no avail as it is not EA/Bullfrog's policy to compensate on such issues! That kind of attitude plainly sucks big time, and I will certainly think twice before purchasing an EA/Bullfrog title in the future.

Robert McHugo

A Doh! As the right honourable Homer Simpson would stutter. How can this happen, we wondered? "I am sorry to hear about the difficulties you experienced with your copy of *Dungeon Keeper 2*," said Lidia Stojanovic, Bullfrog's UK PR manager. "Our technical helplines are in place to assist our customers in these situations, and as I'm sure you will appreciate, with so many different PCs and technical specifications available, it can take time to get to the bottom of a query. I am pleased that we were able to help you rectify the problem so you could get on and enjoy the game."

Hmm, righto... but what about the shedload of calls Robert had to make in his quest to get to the bottom of the problem? "It is not Electronic Arts' policy to reimburse telephone charges," explained Lidia, "but as a gesture of goodwill I am prepared to send you a complimentary game. The game sent to you will depend on availability at time of posting."

Your details have been forwarded, Robert... ☺

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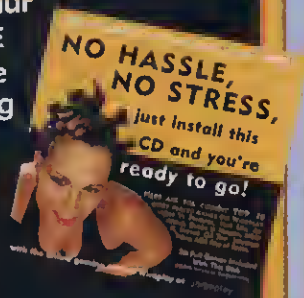
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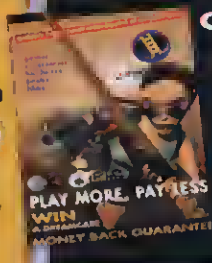
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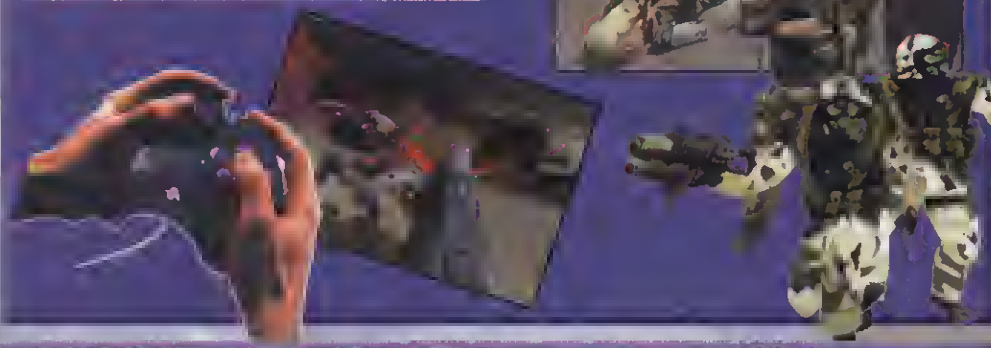
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Set in Egypt and shifting away from the gun blazing action of the last two instalments, TR4 returns to the puzzle solving and exploration of the original, making for a more cerebral experience all round.



DESCENT 3 £9.99

3D 360° SHOOTER rrp 34.99



HALF-LIFE OPPOSING FORCE £17.99

3D ADVENTURE SHOOTER rrp 24.99

An official expansion pack for the best selling Half Life, Opposing Force casts you as one of the government soldiers. A new alien race has appeared amid the chaos, and it is down to you to deal with this deadly threat. Opposing Force shows you Half Life from a whole new angle!



GABRIEL KNIGHT 3 £24.99

OCCULT ADVENTURE rrp 34.99

The world famous series returns with an all new game engine. Now presented in stunning 3D, the game once again follows Gabriel Knight as he seeks out the truth of another bizarre mystery. With an atmospheric soundtrack, beautiful graphics and an engrossing storyline, Gabriel Knight 3 is not to be missed.



DAIKATANA £27.99

3D SHOOTER rrp 34.99

Set across 4 different time zones, from ancient Greece to futuristic Japan, each with their own individual weaponry, enemies and missions, Daikatana aims to reinvent the 3D genre. Incredibly varied weapons and a strong plot with an incredible time travelling story will leave you breathless.



FIFA 2000 £28.99

CLASSIC FOOTBALL SIM rrp 34.99

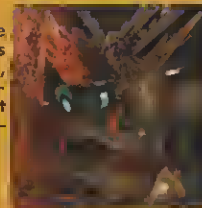
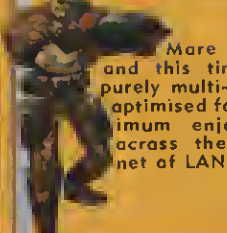
The best selling football sim returns for its annual outing, with a whole host of improved features. New team strips and stats, updated graphics and all new music are just some of the many new additions to the popular series.



QUAKE 3 £27.99

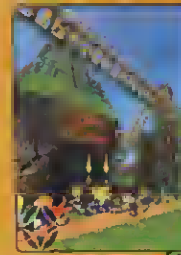
THE GODFATHER OF 1st PERSON SHOOTERS rrp 34.99

More quake and this time it's purely multi-player, optimised for maximum enjoyment across the internet of LAN.



THEME PARK 2 £28.99

THEME PARK 'UP EM' rrp 34.99



One of the best selling games of all time finally receives a long awaited sequel. Create the ultimate rollercoaster then ride it yourself in full 3D! Four different themes (eg Jungle) plus you can download additional attractions from themeparkworld.com. Keep your punters happy with ever more extravagant and dangerous rides!



UNREAL TOURNAMENT £28.99

3D SHOOTER rrp 34.99



Designed to recreate the thrill of multiplayer gaming for one player, it has advanced artificial intelligence to simulate playing against devious human opponents. New modes of play include Capture the Flag and Assault, where players have to defend or attack

a fortress. 35 brand new arenas, 3 new weapons and numerous scenarios to increase replay value. You can program how you want your computer controlled adversaries to react or behave when their getting beaten to easily. A perfect game for polishing your first person shooter prowess. (Demo on our free online gaming Cd)



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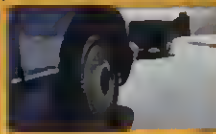
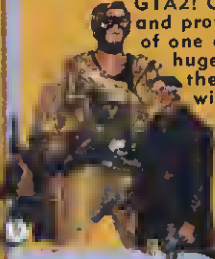


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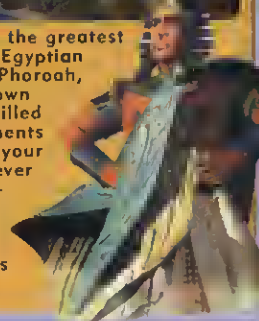
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FLIGHT SIM

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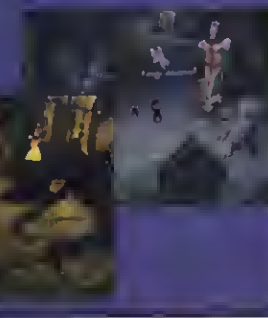


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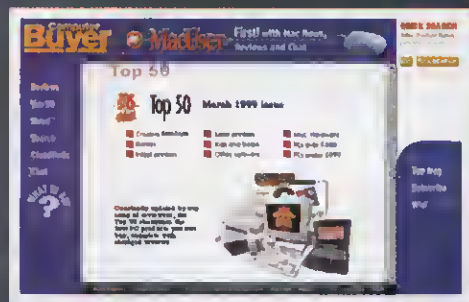


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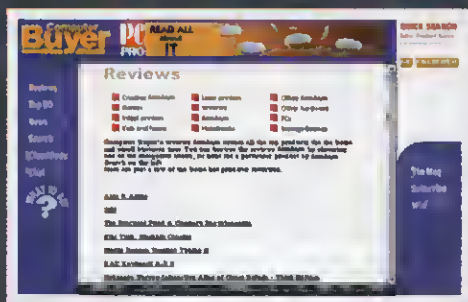
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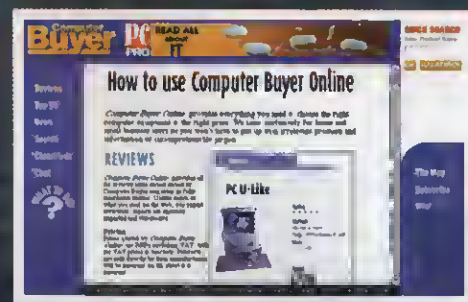
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PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

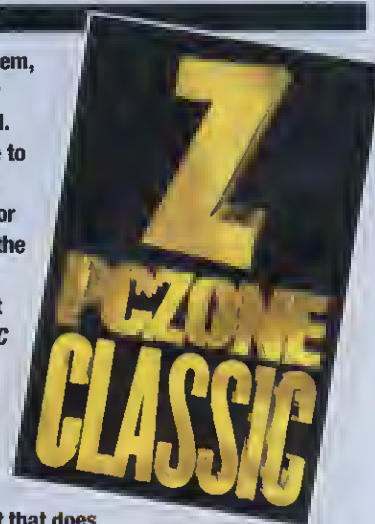
This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent; check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month that are often better than some of the games in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100, and a lesser title will drop out to make room for it.

Under the new *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. As you can see from the *PC ZONE* hall of fame on page 65, there are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* award for excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a classic, we mean it!



BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; it is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

GAME OF THE MOMENT

These are the games currently residing on our hard drives



Buy on-line www.jakarta.co.uk

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

STRATEGY

HALF-LIFE

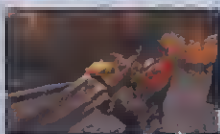


BENCHMARK GAME

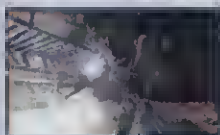
PCZ #71 • 95%
 Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing: Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.
PUBLISHER Sierra
 • 0118 9209 100



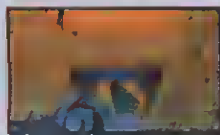
UNREAL TOURNAMENT PCZ #81 • 90%
 Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III's* multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



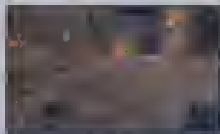
QUAKE III ARENA PCZ #87 • 89%
 The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* makes it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



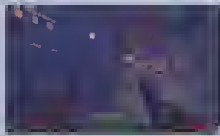
ALIENS VS PREDATOR PCZ #77 • 87%
 It might not be the best, but it's definitely the scariest FPS you can buy. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



QUAKE II: QUAD DAMAGE PCZ #59 • 86%
 The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Single-player mode might be a let-down, but if you have access to a network or a fast Internet connection you'll be in heaven. Now available as a pack with all the official mission packs.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



THIEF II: THE METAL AGE PCZ #88 • 82%
NEWENTRY The original *Thief* set new standards in FPSs with its move away from mindless action towards stealth, and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



SHOD: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION PCZ #71 • 81%
 Halt *Quake*, halt *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are an iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.
PUBLISHER MicroDots • 00 33 1 4601 5401



KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME PCZ #77 • 80%
 This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though - it's 'classic adult entertainment'.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BUDGET

SIN PCZ #70 • 80%
 Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No classic, but an excellent game in its own right.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



BUDGET

JEDI KNIGHT/ MYSTERIES OF THE SITH PCZ #74 • 77%
 As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disc represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01895 456 7000

AGE OF EMPIRES II

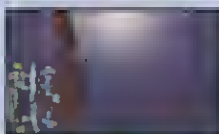


BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #84 • 90%
 It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age Of Empires II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units, and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. You'd be advised to forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and enjoy this classic RTS instead.
PUBLISHER Microsoft
 • 0345 002000



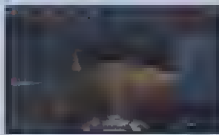
CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME PCZ #68 • 89%
 A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.
PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234



HOMEWORLD PCZ #82 • 85%
Homeworld delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the only limits are your imagination.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



THEOCRACY PCZ #88 • 84%
NEWENTRY Blending the best of *Age Of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy's* mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay lets you guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



IMPERIUM GALACTICA II PCZ #85 • 83%
 Space expansion and empire building has never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, so you'll know your way around in no time.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



C&C: TIBERIAN SUN PCZ #81 • 82%
 Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

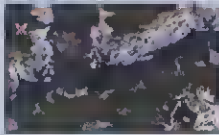


BUDGET

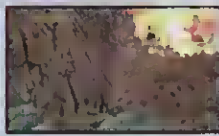
TOTAL ANNIHILATION PCZ #56 • 82%
 With a ridiculous number of units and unrivaled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no-one should be without a copy.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



DUNGEON KEEPER 2 PCZ #79 • 81%
Dungeon Keeper was a great idea. However, *DK2* plucks the essence of the original game, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and takes the excellent concept introduced by its predecessor to the next dimension.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



STARCRAFT PCZ #64 • 80%
 Still one of the most popular games online, *StarCraft* offered three distinct races and one of the most involving stories yet seen in real-time strategy. It may look a bit old hat nowadays, but it runs like a dream if you're still doggedly hanging on to your P90.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



WARZONE 2100 PCZ #75 • 78%
 The first proper 3D real-time strategy game to be any good, this sci-fi effort offered almost unlimited variety thanks to a semi-dynamic campaign and masses of research. Might take some getting used to, but it's worth the effort.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

ACTION/ADVENTURES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #80 • 93%
 ⚡ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully roll the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are. In short, it's a title that's absolutely indispensable.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT **PCZ #87 • 87%**
 ⚡ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*, it's a dark, adult, scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind – and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



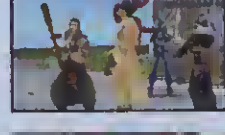
BALDUR'S GATE **PCZ #73 • 85%**
 ⚡ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



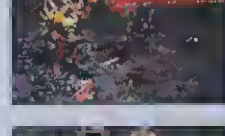
FINAL FANTASY VII **PCZ #66 • 84%**
 ⚡ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000



FALLOUT 2 **PCZ #71 • 83%**
 ⚡ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real lite-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



FINAL FANTASY VIII **PCZ #87 • 83%**
FFVIII features westernised graphics and the most incredible cut-scenes we've ever seen on a PC. Like its predecessor, this outing suffers from console linearity and repetitive battles, but it still retains enough charm to entrance most gamers.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



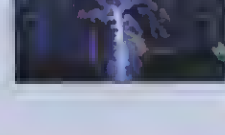
DIABLO **PCZ #48 • 78%**
 ⚡ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game. The much anticipated sequel is out this summer.
PUBLISHER Zanic/Bizzard • 01626 332233



DDIUM **PCZ #87 • 74%**
 Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy*, with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll get a good idea of what *DDIUM* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



NDX **PCZ #87 • 72%**
 This *Diablo*-style RPG is immensely addictive. The levels may be a little repetitive but you'll find that persistence pays off in the form of great spells and weapons. Watch out for a massive multiplayer community spawning around this one.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



LANDS OF LORE III **PCZ #74 • 80%**
 ⚡ Westwood knows how to tell a good story, and this latest title in the series is certainly the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LDR III* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.
PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442

GRIM FANDANGO



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #71 • 90%
 ⚡ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.
PUBLISHER LucasArts • 020 7368 2255



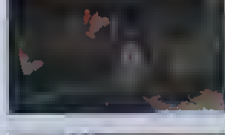
DISCWORLD NOIR **PCZ #79 • 89%**
 ⚡ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games, and is all the better for it. In our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE **PCZ #84 • 88%**
 ⚡ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest Indy outing. Thankfully the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



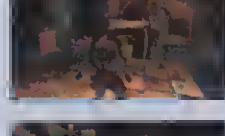
THE NOMAD SOUL **PCZ #83 • 87%**
 ⚡ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by tap-dancers and (guip) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



NOCTURNE **PCZ #84 • 86%**
 ⚡ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.
PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900



MESSIAH **PCZ #85 • 85%**
 Shimy's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and some gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



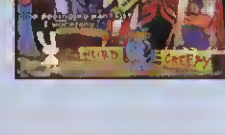
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION **PCZ #83 • 85%**
 ⚡ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000



RESIDENT EVIL II **PCZ #75 • 82%**
 ⚡ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore, make for top entertainment.
PUBLISHER Virgin • 020 7368 2255



MONKEY ISLAND 8DUNTY PACK **PCZ #74 • 80%**
 ⚡ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000



SAM & MAX AND DAY OF THE TENTACLE **NOT REVIEWED • 78%**
 ⚡ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them. Now.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

BENCHMARK GAME



BUDGET

PCZ #6R • 91%
 ⚡ Sporting an updated TOCA engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of the competition. The fact that it's now available as a budget title makes it an absolute steal.
PUBLISHER Codemasters
 • 01926 814132

MIDTOWN MADNESS PCZ #79 • 89%
 ⚡ Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

MOTOCROSS MADNESS PCZ #67 • 85%
 ⚡ This is an astoundingly addictive game. It boasts loads of game and race options and is tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. If you want to have fun on two wheels, this is an absolute must-buy.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

LE MANS 24 HOURS PCZ #87 • 83%
 Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP PCZ #84 • 82%
 ⚡ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.
PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015

TOCA 2 PCZ #76 • 82%
 ⚡ Predictably, Codemasters have gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MONACO GRAND PRIX PCZ #69 • 81%
 ⚡ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the Artificial Intelligence is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

ORIVER PCZ #82 • 80%
 ⚡ Criticised for lacking the depth of *Midtown Madness* (it is a PlayStation conversion after all), this is still a good game. A pumping '70s soundtrack helps to recreate that 'Starsky And Hutch' feeling. A wheel, an afro haircut and a false moustache are, of course, essential.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

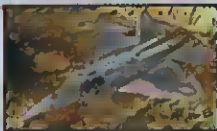
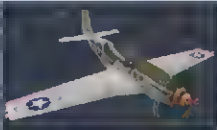
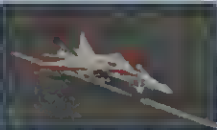
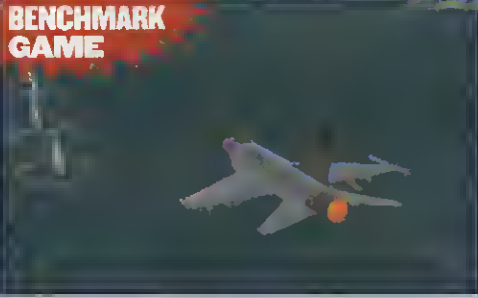
SUPERBIKE 2000 PCZ #88 • 78%
NEWENTRY The best motorcycling sim on PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. For pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SEGA RALLY 2 PCZ #84 • 79%
 ⚡ Not as good as hooking up with five of your mates down the local arcade, but this is a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car round the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?
PUBLISHER Sega • 020 8995 3399

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #72 • 92%
 ⚡ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that for once we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition well and truly standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – it's the best example of its kind and we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.
PUBLISHER MicroProse
 • 01454 893893

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR PCZ #68 • 89%
 ⚡ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece seems perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.
PUBLISHER Ocean/DIO • 0161 832 6633

F/A-18E SUPER HORNET PCZ #83 • 88%
 ⚡ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great, big, capital 'R', then look no further. In fact, this game is so lifelike that the US Navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.
PUBLISHER Titus Software • 020 7700 2119

MIG ALLEY PCZ #80 • 87%
 ⚡ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission planning elements.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

APACHE HAVOC PCZ #73 • 85%
 ⚡ Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one to go for if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. As for the graphics, they are just to die for.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

FLIGHT UNLIMITED III PCZ #82 • 86%
 ⚡ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this is (along with the *Flight Sim* series) an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLANKER 2.0 PCZ #85 • 86%
 Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yank blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you go off shooting stuff.
PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300

JANE'S USAF PCZ #88 • 85%
NEWENTRY *USAF* offers the playability to let non-hardcore flyers have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

TEAM ALLIGATOR PCZ #85 • 84%
 Helicopter sims are rare but, when they appear on the scene, they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache/Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt, the best Russian chopper sim around.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

FLIGHT SIM 2000 PCZ #85 • 80%
 Although not a huge step forward from *Flight Sim 98*, it's still the choice of millions of high-flyers. There is a price to pay for its incredible looks, however – you'll need a giant NASA PC to run the thing. Expect a load of meaty expansion packs to follow.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

SPORTS

FIFA 2000

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #84 • 88%

⊕ The *FIFA* franchise has been rolling on for years and it certainly gets better each time. Although it missed a classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. If you're into your football, then what are you waiting for? You should own a copy of *FIFA 2000*. It's as simple as that.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442



SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

PCZ #85 • 86%

Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199



NBA LIVE 2000

PCZ #85 • 83%

As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the 1950s onwards, comedy haircuts *et al*. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



NBA: INSIDE DRIVE

PCZ #82 • 82%

⊕ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but then, what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

PCZ #80 • 82%

⊕ Knocking *Links* off the office golfing perch is no mean feat, but *PGA's* gameplay is so addictive that all other contenders can lee off. Our very own Keith Pullin took the entire summer off to design his own courses for it. But he has got a hole in one in the head.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



BUDGET

VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 82%

⊕ OK, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

PCZ #68 • 81%

⊕ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the baize you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255



ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 80%

⊕ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for football fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which helps to maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



BRIAN LARA CRICKET

PCZ #75 • 78%

⊕ Cricket isn't the easiest game to convert to the PC but Codemasters have done the best job, despite the fact that *Brian Lara Cricket* has obviously been ported straight over from the PlayStation. For aspiring country-dwellers everywhere.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



NHL 2000

PCZ #83 • 77%

⊕ EA's hockey series has improved graphics and Artificial Intelligence, fast-paced addictive gameplay and you can now graft your digitised face onto a player, then watch it beaten with a stick to a bloody pulp. Now that's family entertainment.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #82 • 89%

⊕ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany where you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656



FREESPACE 2

PCZ #84 • 85%

⊕ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222



X WING: ALLIANCE

PCZ #77 • 83%

⊕ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode in the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



BUDGET

PRIVATEER 2

PCZ #44 • 80%

⊕ Hot as open-ended as *Elite*, but far more rewarding as an overall experience. The graphics look great even today, and hey it's on budget – so it's better value for money than ever.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



BUDGET

WING COMMANDER PROPHECY COLD

PCZ #59 • 77%

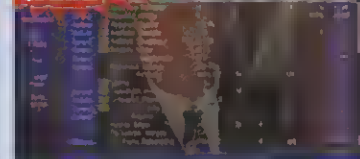
⊕ The graphics look a bit dated now, but this is still a great game by anyone's standards. *Wing* neophytes start here.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #84 • 92%

⊕ More than a game... it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss goodbye to your social life, and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



THE SIMS

PCZ #87 • 86%

This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life – it's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



CAESAR III

PCZ #70 • 85%

⊕ Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



SIMCITY 3000

PCZ #74 • 84%

⊕ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-fimers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

PCZ #75 • 83%

⊕ Pack out your own theme park with the most finchish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden 'dippers, to Nemesis-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

ONLINE ONLY

ULTIMA ONLINE

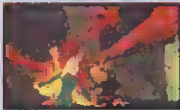
BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #80 • 92%

☛ In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection. The best thing about *Ultima Online* is that your world is constantly changing and evolving, and it's populated by real people, just like you.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



EVERQUEST

PCZ #80 • 85%

☛ If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, and more linear as a result. Repetitive at higher levels but worth checking out all the same.

PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only) • 020 7428 5961

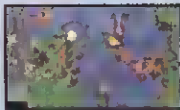


ASHERON'S CALL NEW ENTRY

PCZ #8R • 76%

The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. Shame you can't kill other humans – most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



NETSTORM

PCZ #59 • 73%

☛ A curious blend of chess, *Red Alert* and Baron Munchausen, *NetStorm* is also an elegant and addictive multiplayer game that works beautifully across a standard modem.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



WARDIRDS

PCZ #70 • 72%

☛ The original WWII online dogfighting sim and still one of the best. With over 48 different aircraft to choose from, this should keep anyone with a passing interest in air combat very happy indeed.

PUBLISHER Interactive Magic • 01344 409399

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #79 • 91%

☛ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that's come closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the very first mission, it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SWAT 3

PCZ #85 • 89%

Artificial Intelligence doesn't get any better than *SWAT 3*s. Add to this some spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



BATTLEZONE 2

PCZ #84 • 87%

☛ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ROGUE SPEAR

PCZ #84 • 86%

☛ We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



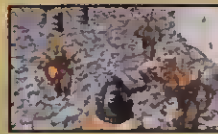
SPEC OPS 2

PCZ #84 • 84%

☛ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



DOOM

☛ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



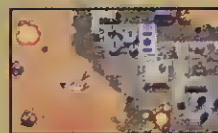
ULTIMA VII

☛ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



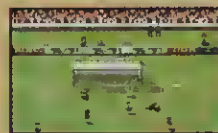
ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

☛ We reviewed this game back in the very first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



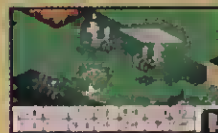
DUNE II

☛ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



SENSIBLE WURLLI OF SOCCER

☛ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers last frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

☛ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles, and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever on its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET

☛ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



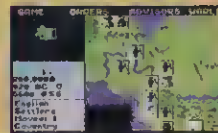
WING COMMANDER

☛ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and people stayed away in their millions. Will these people ever learn?



TOMB RAIDER

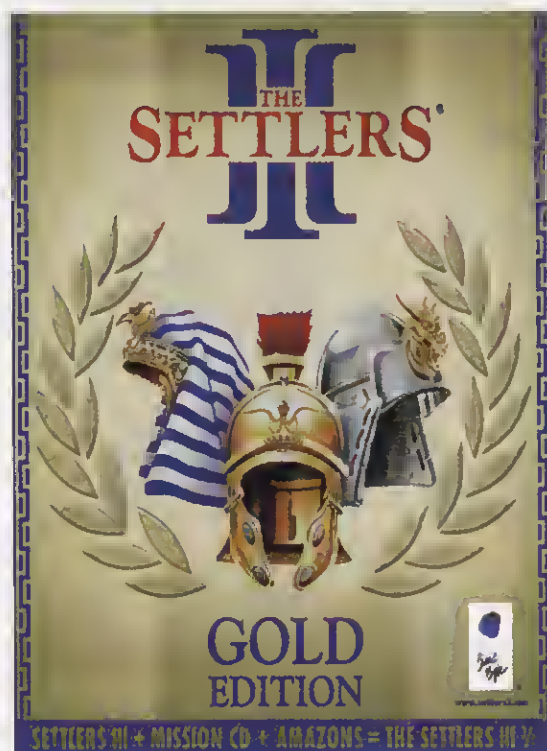
☛ She might be getting a bit rusty round the girls, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

☛ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

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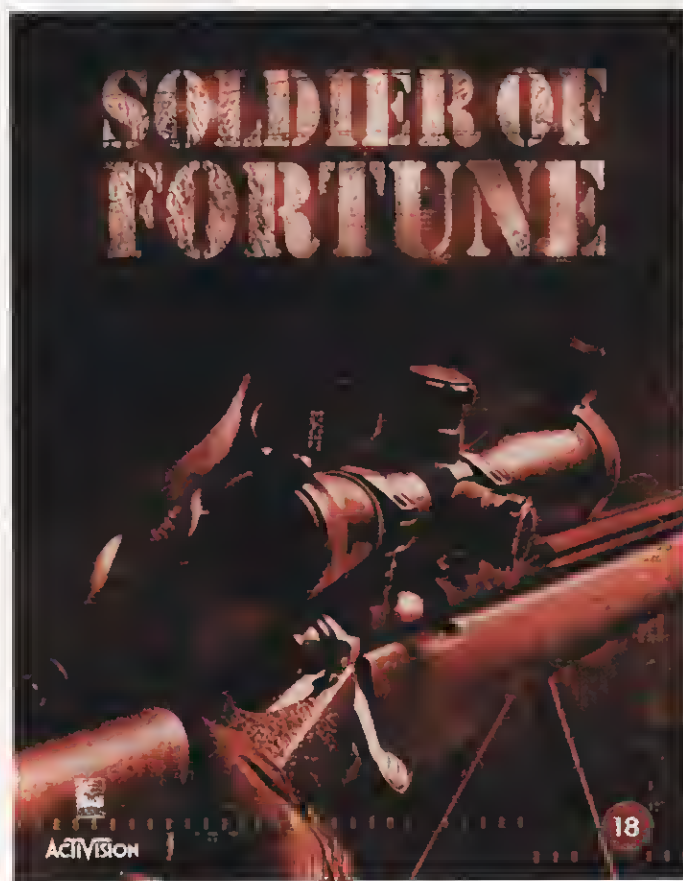
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soldier of fortune



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DANGEROUSLY ENTERTAINING

ON THE CD

This month we bring you a CD packed full of fun. With four exclusive demos and some very handy patches. Enjoy...

WORDMAN: Martin Korda DISCMAN: Daniel Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.

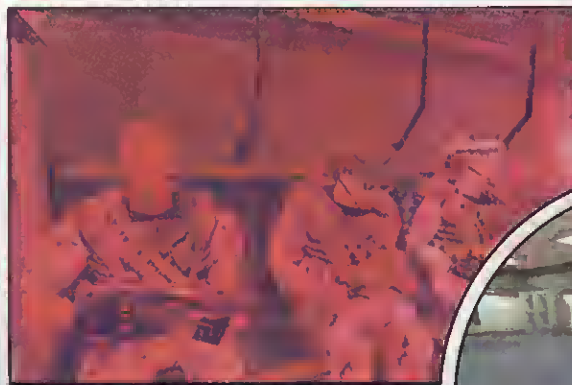


DEMOS + SHAREWARE

HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE

Sierra

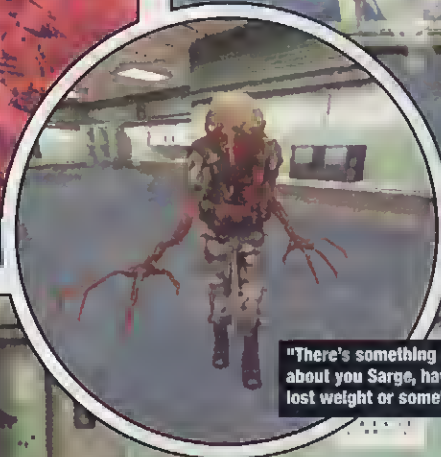
WORLD FIRST



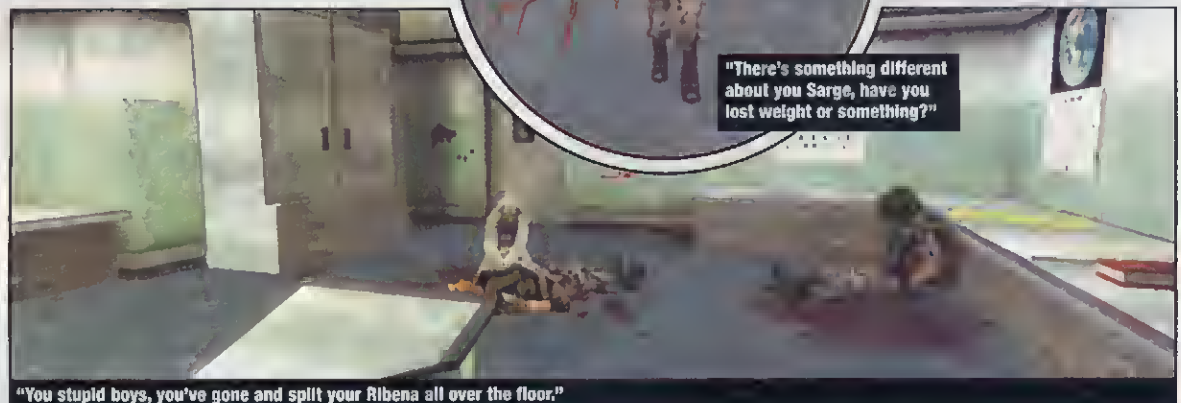
"All right privates, I want a volunteer to wash out the latrines."



"Have you ever heard of a thing called a door?"



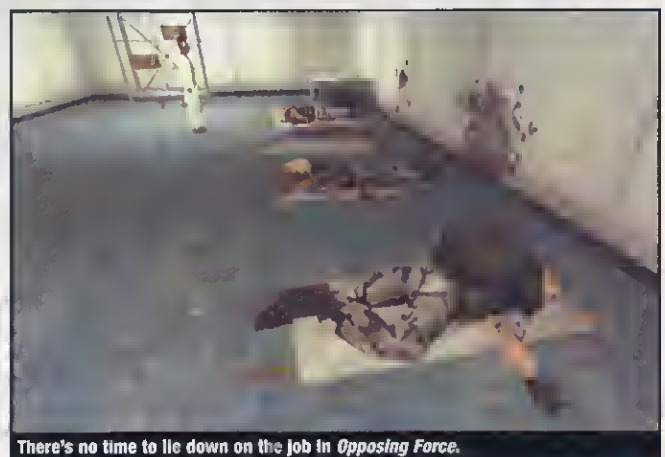
"There's something different about you Sarge, have you lost weight or something?"



"You stupid boys, you've gone and split your Ribena all over the floor."

Every *Half-Life* fan's wish is, of course, to see a sequel to the original game as soon as possible. However, if you can't wait for that, then *Half-Life: Opposing Force* should more than satisfy your cravings to shoot some aliens. This fantastic demo places you at the start of the game, where your squad's helicopter has been shot down during a supposed rescue operation. With all your comrades either dead or mutated, you must battle your way to the communications tower and call in reinforcements. During this journey you will encounter many characters who will fall victim to gruesome and untimely deaths, unless you can save them. With the usual array of evil creatures intent on ripping your arms and legs off, this demo is full of tension and excitement and will have you literally screaming out for the full version.

Controls: Keyboard and mouse



There's no time to lie down on the job in *Opposing Force*.

KLINGON ACADEMY

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Interplay

Become the captain of a Klingon warship in this month's second exclusive demo *Klingon Academy*. Included on the CD is an excellent tutorial, which will take you through all the intricacies of succeeding in battle. It's important to learn the ship's functions and how to effectively issue orders to your crew during an engagement, otherwise your craft won't last very long when it comes to the real thing. Once you're convinced that you can handle your ship properly, the demo throws you into a

battle against a Romulan starship. Tactics, good crew management and a level-headed approach will win every time over a gung-ho mentality. There's more than enough here to prepare even a novice captain for the challenge of winning with Klingon honour and efficiency during interstellar combat.

Controls: Keyboard/Joystick



⊖ A Klingon warship in all its glory. Like you didn't already know.

Ⓛ "Engineering. Kath takth ran sargthl! Sorry, I had something in my throat."

PLAYER MANAGER 2000

EXCLUSIVE

Anco



Camara catches the ageing Everton defence flat footed.



OI, offside ref!



Camara makes Unsworth look like a TILL.

There isn't a single football fan who hasn't thought they could do better than the manager of the team they support. Now Anco is giving you the opportunity to prove you can (or can't as the case may be). Take control of your favourite team and steer them to championship and cup success, winning awards and accolades along the way. Either that or get relegated in your first season, knocked out 7-0 in the third round of the FA Cup by Kidderminster Harriers and plunged into debt. The fate and future of your team is in your hands. Better still, if you think your players aren't up to

the task, there's the option to drop one of them and select yourself instead. Every aspect of a manager's job is recreated, from dealing with the contracts of your existing players, to scouting and buying new ones. Your team's game plan can be tweaked to your satisfaction, and the matches themselves can be extremely tense, accurately recreating the real thing. Pressure has never been so much fun.

Controls: Mouse

EVOLVA

Virgin Interactive

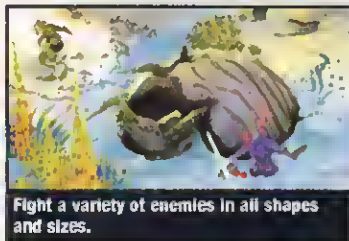
EXCLUSIVE

A future-based shoot 'em up with a difference, *Evolva* is the fourth of our exclusive demos on this month's superb cover disk. Taking charge of a team of four Genohunters (elite warriors capable of absorbing the abilities of those they defeat), you must lead your squad in a mission to rid the land of the parasites that are intent on taking over the world. Along the way, you and your mutants will battle a multitude of creatures, as well as encountering simple puzzles. With team work essential to your success, especially when facing opponents in combat, this is an excellent chance to get to grips with the control system before buying the finished product. If you want to know more turn to our full review on page 81.

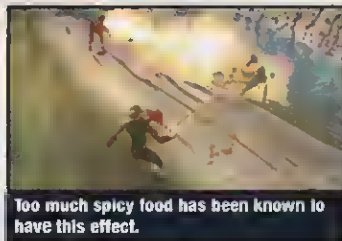
Controls: Mouse/Keyboard



Your team is made up of four mutant things.



Fight a variety of enemies in all shapes and sizes.



Too much spicy food has been known to have this effect.

MAJESTY

Cyberlore Studios

Be a king for a day and build up a town of prosperous market places and powerful guilds, in this new game from Cyberlore Studios. The demo provides you with a mission in which you must purge the land of evil forces and destroy a castle. This is done through sensible resource management and the recruitment of heroes who'll (hopefully) take up the challenges you set. Simple, yet strangely addictive, this game will have you buying a jewelled crown before you know it.

Controls: Mouse



City guards and warriors will protect your city from any nasties, hopefully.

ON THE CD PATCHES

All new patches for some of the games you love most. See the CD browser for explanations on what each one does

Abomination: The Nemesis Project v2.7.0
Close Combat IV: Battle Of The Bulge v4.02
Fly! V1.01.B5
Half-Life v1.0.0.5 to v1.0.1.6
Half-Life v1.0.0.9 to v1.0.1.6
Half-Life v1.0.1.3 to v1.0.1.6
Half-Life v1.0.1.5 to v1.0.1.6
Half-Life: Initial Encounter v5.0.1.6
Hype: The Time Quest
Indiana Jones And The Infernal

Machine v1.2
Mortyr
Need For Speed: Hope Pursuit (Voodoo3 patch)
Rally Championship 2000 v5.27.1
Starfleet Command v1.00 to v1.03
Starfleet Command v1.02.01 to v1.03
SWAT 3: Close Quarters Battle
TA: Kingdoms v3.0
Phoenix v1.1
Wheel Of Time 333b Patch

ON THE CD EDITORIAL

Rolling demos of forthcoming games, a few handy tips and a *Championship Manager 99/00* season update

Commandos 2
 First look at *Commandos 2*.
Crimson Skies
 Take a sneak peek at *Crimson Skies*.
Force Commander (Requires Quicktime)
 First look at *Force Commander*.

Tips and Solutions
 Handy hints and top tips on all your fave games. Well, most of them.
Championship Manager 99/00 Season Update (New Version)
 Features the latest transfers, updates and all the rest.

STAR SHATTER

John DiCamillo

The majority of games developed by a single person end up resembling *Space Invaders*, but with *Star Shatter* (featured in last month's TeamTalk section), developer John DiCamillo is creating something special. A space combat sim, which is still not completely finished *Star Shatter* is shaping up to be an exceptional solo project for this talented young programmer. Check it out and then mail your suggestions and encouragement to milod@home.com.

Controls: Keyboard/Joystick

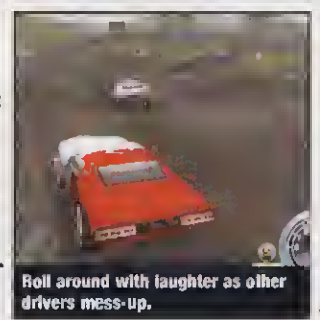
For a solo project, *Star Shatter* is shaping up to be a truly impressive game.

DEMOLITION RACER

Infogrames

Rev your engines and get ready for some seriously violent driving action with this high octane racer. There's only one track and car to choose from, but that's more than enough to get you into the spirit of ramming your fellow competitors, rather than sportingly overtaking them. Watch with glee while your opponents' cars degenerate into wrecks as you scythe your way through the field, and laugh smugly as they barrel roll when you shunt them out of your way.

Controls: Keyboard/Gamepad/Wheel



Roll around with laughter as other drivers mess-up.

TOWER OF THE ANCIENTS

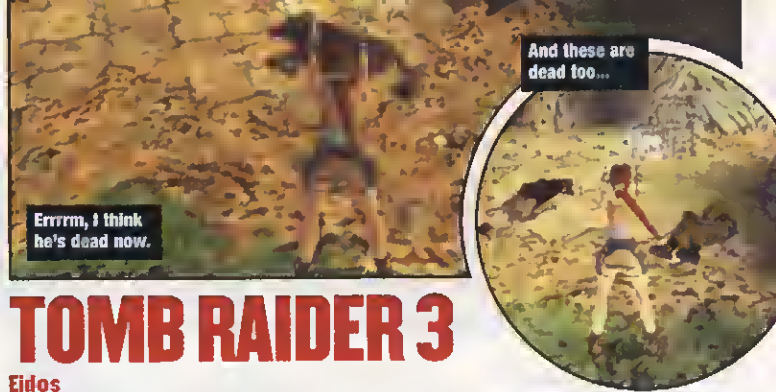
Fiendish Entertainment



Like Tetris, Tower Of The Ancients is hugely addictive.

Tetris was one of the most addictive games of all time. Its simplicity made it instantly playable and popular. Many games have tried to copy this classic, but none have succeeded in emulating its success. However, check out *Tower Of The Ancients* and you may agree this is about to change. The 3D, tower building gameplay may sound dull, but be warned, you may be in for a few late nights once you start.

Controls: Keyboard



Errrm, I think he's dead now.

And these are dead too...

TOMB RAIDER 3

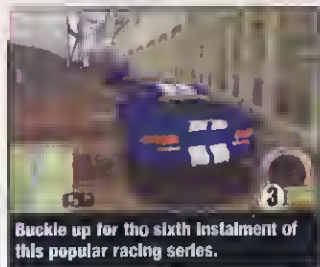
Eidos

Jump, shoot and run your way to the end of this level from the full version of *Tomb Raider 3*. While controlling our heroine Lara, you will encounter rabid dogs, trigger-happy guards, daring jumps and huge rivers, so you will have to master all of the controls Miss Croft is to have any chance of survival. After all, we wouldn't want to see anything happen to everyone's favourite computer sprite, would we? Er, would we? So get practising NOW!

Controls: Keyboard/Gamepad

TEST DRIVE 6

Cryo



Buckle up for the sixth instalment of this popular racing series.

Get behind the wheel of a high performance sports car, in the sixth outing for this popular driving series. There's one full track on the demo, over which you must compete against other powerful cars in a race to the finish line. Take short cuts to get there first, but be careful to avoid the police or you'll get nicked.

Controls: Keyboard/Gamepad/Wheel

ON THE CD ONLINE

Make the Net that little bit easier to use with our selection of helpful programs

GameSpy v2.18

Fire this up and it'll find the fastest servers playing your favourite games.

NeoTrace 2.12

NeoTrace helps you find the best online game servers on the Internet.

PingTool 2.6a

Our favourite tool for finding the fastest game servers on the Internet.

FreeUK

Sign-up files for this free ISP

DUN Manager 1.2c

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Play the Web's coolest audio and video with Windows Media Player.

ON THE CD EXTENDED PLAY

A host of *Unreal Tournament* levels for you and your mates to master. See page 154 for more details

Unreal Tournament Map Information
UT Assault Levels

UT Deathmatch Levels
UT Domination Levels

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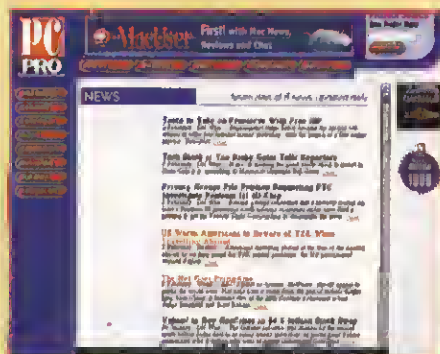
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OVER
2000
SEARCHABLE
REVIEWS

EXTENDED PLAY



We've given you stacks of stuff for our online supergame, *Unreal Tournament*. Now we present the best nine maps in each map category so you don't have to play all the bad ones

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 149.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Blistering pace, a massive range of play options and game variations, great sounds, snappy online play and an interface to die for make *Unreal Tournament* our top shooter of the moment. Here we present 36 of our favourite maps, separated into the appropriate categories complete with a screenshot and reviewette. If you missed our last issue, you'll find the best maps are here, plus a load of new ones. Bon appetit.

ASSAULT

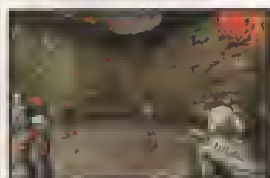
The World War II-based Assault map has had more gamers staring bleary-eyed into their screens at 5.30am than any other. Two teams are given very different starting points and very different objectives. The strategies are many and varied, making no two games the same.

BRIDGE



Players: 7-15
Description: Although slightly angular in appearance, the giant metal span from which this map takes its name is rather imposing and central to your mission. Fight your way through the two enemy encampments and then blow up the bridge.
Rating: ★★★★★

LAVAFORT



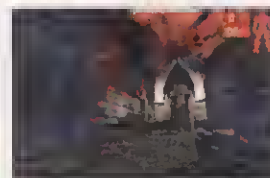
Players: 6-12
Description: Head for the computer that controls the main gates, destroy its data bank and then make your way to the gates. Leg it on through, keep on blasting and find the lava control pump. Destroy it and you've won.
Rating: ★★★★★

MINE



Players: 10 Max
Description: Starting off outside the mine entrance and heading down into the tunnel always gives us a buzz. It's well crafted and full of great play areas.
Rating: ★★★★★

RESURRECTION OF THE WARLOCK



Players: 6-14
Description: This map just oozes atmosphere. It tells the story of a Warlock, imprisoned in a tower, who has risen in order to cause general havoc.
Rating: ★★★★★

SIEGE



Players: 30 Max
Description: This is an updated

PLAYERS: 6-12

Description: Infiltrate a crumbling castle and fight your way up to the main tower. The level borrows heavily from *Doom* #scenes, with plenty of lava down in the dungeon and rather angular brushwork to go with it. Plays well with bots.
Rating: ★★★★★

SKYVILLE



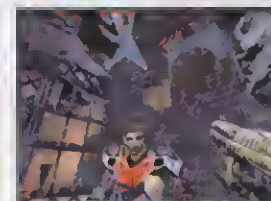
Players: 2-8
Description: A small map, and thus best suited to a LAN rather than Internet play. Although not particularly well crafted, it features some excellent fighting arenas, is full of imagination and the gameplay runs very smoothly.
Rating: ★★★★★

SOLSTICE



Players: 4-8
Description: Like an increasing number of *Unreal Tournament* maps, Solstice leans heavily on the look and feel of *UT*'s predecessor, *Unreal*. Although criticised, the title has a very distinct flavour that translates well into multiplayer *UT* mayhem.
Rating: ★★★★★

SUNSPIRE



Players: 6-20
Description: Superb CTF map that doesn't go mad on architectural tricks and treats, but instead delivers in terms of great layout and

NET ADDRESSES

UNREAL CITY

UT Homepage www.unrealtournament.com

Unreal Files www.unrealfiles.com

Unreal Universe www.unrealuniverse.com

Planet Unreal www.planetunreal.com

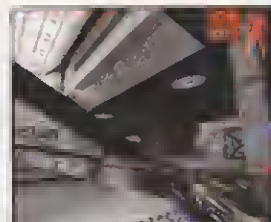
Unreal Kingdom www.unrealnews.com

Assault version of an old map entitled The Sun Spire, maintaining a very rich *Unreal* flavour throughout. And that's no bad thing: the outdoor visuals are gobsmacking, and bot navigation is first rate.
Rating: ★★★★★

CAPTURE THE FLAG

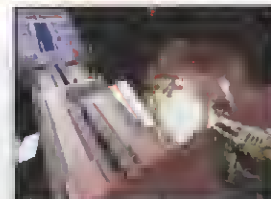
OK, so everyone's played Capture The Flag. Hike on over to the enemy base, yank out their flag, bring it back to your ranch and rack up the score. Or stay at home and defend your base from the opposing team as they try and pinch yours. Either way, it's a fast-paced game, ideal for online play. And bringing home the flag makes you feel like God.

DECK 16



Players: 8-16
Description: An updated CTF conversion of an old favourite, DMDeck 16. Although visually shaded by many of the stunning Assault maps, it's playability that counts and this one has loads.
Rating: ★★★★★

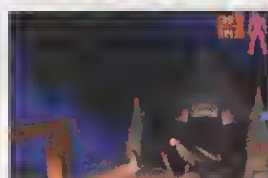
DIAMOND SWORD



Players: 6-20
Description: Superb CTF map that doesn't go mad on architectural tricks and treats, but instead delivers in terms of great layout and

fast-paced play. A must.
Rating: ★★★★★

FLOATING PYRAMIDS



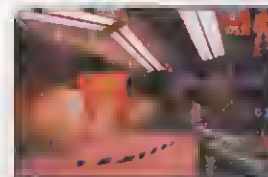
Players: 6-16
Description: Visually impressive arena featuring twin pyramids floating in space. Strong Egyptian theme, with a little too many weird corridors and tunnels – a lot of the time you end up lost. Great with the full complement of players.
Rating: ★★★★★

KANTON



Players: 6-10
Description: A fun symmetrical map that runs at a decent lick on lower-spec machines. Bot play is excellent, and pace is high. Large central arena plays host to a number of splendid frag-fests.
Rating: ★★★★★

KILLGORE



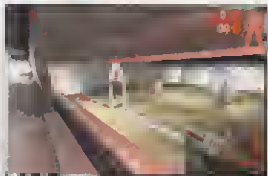
Players: 6-14
Description: Another map that benefits from having a large number of players dashing around inside it. A big mound in the middle blocks your way between the bases and, like the Kanton map, it's great for monster battles.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **NOORK**



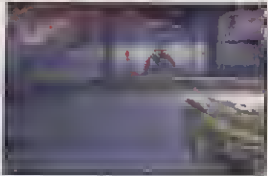
Players: 8 Max
Description: A conversion of an old *Unreal* map, Noork's Elbow. If you've played the 'original', this level will bring the memories back – it's worth it for that alone. Eight-player ceiling is a little stingy.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **OUTLOOK**



Players: 4-16
Description: Although this massive single arena was the author's first effort, it's difficult not to leap up onto a ledge, sniper rifle up against one shoulder, and spend hours picking off bots as they trudge across the acres of open land. Strangely addictive.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **RECIPROCITY**



Players: 12-14
Description: Showing off the power of the *Unreal Tournament* engine, this arena requires a more substantial processor to deal with all the detail. Great fun and worth adding to your collection.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **DEATHMATCH**

If it moves, shoot it. If you were reared on multiplayer *Doom* as we were, you'll still remember the countless hours plugged into your PC as if you were undergoing dialysis. Hours of play and you were sure your eyes were gently throbbing in their sockets. *Unreal Tournament* brings things to a new level with mutators such as InstaGib and Last Man Standing.

★ **AGGRESSIVE TENDENCIES**



Players: 2-4
Description: A teeny tiny map suitable for one-on-one play. In fact, it's the only map we've come across so far that generates so many laughs with just two players onboard. So, if you've got a small network, make sure that you get Monday.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **ANUBIS**

Players: 8-12
Description: In this level's documentation, the author talks about connectivity and flow. And it soon becomes clear that he knows his stuff. The level is massive fun to play, and is suitable both for snipers and soldiers alike.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **TOP MAP**



Players: 2-6
Description: A small map with a strong Egyptian theme running throughout. It works well just two up, and for this reason it's worth adding to your collection. Bots play well and put up a rather tough challenge. Unfortunately, they have this annoying knack of seeming to be alarmingly smarter than you are.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **APOPNIS**



Players: 6-12
Description: Another map with a heavy Egyptian flavour, Apophis plays beautifully, bringing back memories of those nostalgic early *Doom* sessions. There were a couple of areas where bots seemed to end up stuck, but apart from that, an excellent time was had by all.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **MONDAY**



Players: 2-4
Description: A teeny tiny map suitable for one-on-one play. In fact, it's the only map we've come across so far that generates so many laughs with just two players onboard. So, if you've got a small network, make sure that you get Monday.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **NEOCAVE**



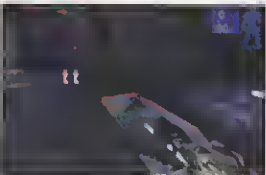
Players: 4-8
Description: A great area in the middle, reminiscent of an old *Doom* level, generates some real old-fashioned deathmatch madness. If you're getting a little bored capturing the bloody flag, give this a shot.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **OUTPOST 13**



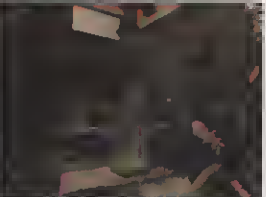
Players: 8-18
Description: Big map with big action, as long as you're full to the hilt with players and bots. We found the bar area of the level to be overrun with bots and very laggy – but then we looked in the Readme and found it to be a known issue. Teach us to look before we leap, eh?
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **RAC'NA**



Players: 10 Minimum
Description: A bit dark and a bit gloomy, Rag'na needs a serious number of players to prevent you wandering around bored. There are a number of excellent vantage points up on the walkways, though, allowing you to create havoc down below.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **UNDER THE MOONLIGHT**



Players: 6-12
Description: Decked out in full medieval regalia, this fast-paced arena feels more like *Hexen* or *Duake II* than *UT*. But that doesn't matter one jot, as there are some nicely designed antechambers, intricate beamwork and a good

choice of great textures to help suck you in.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **DOMINATION**

Secure control points around the map and hold onto them. The longer they stay in your possession, the more points you can chalk up. The key to any Domination level is your understanding of it – you have to know it like you know your John Thomas. Make sure you play it online with a score of others and you'll be addicted within minutes.

★ **SOUTH KASBAH**



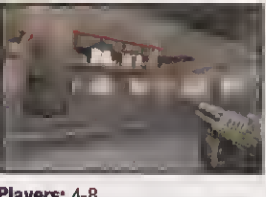
Players: 5-7
Description: Built around the South Morocco Kasbah, this particular level works extremely well. With textured surfaces resembling straw rather than stone, the whole thing feels more like a massive game of paintball. Great stuff.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **ELSNORE**



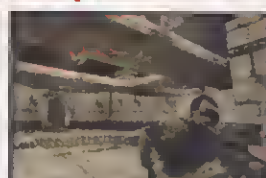
Players: Unknown
Description: Frantic level very much in the *Duake* vein, with bubbling lava pits and plenty of stone and metal. Good mapping techniques mean that there are plenty of vantage points, and very few places where the bots get stuck in a loop.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **COLMUD**



Players: 4-8
Description: Spend your time dashing in and around the buildings of an old medieval town. There's an old *Heretic* map that looks and feels very similar to this, but we can't remember its name.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **RELIQUARY**



Players: 6-12
Description: If you're one of those people who struggles with the *Unreal Editor*, you'll be jealous of the architectural splendence and mapping techniques used in levels such as this. One of the top Domination experiences.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **TAFT**



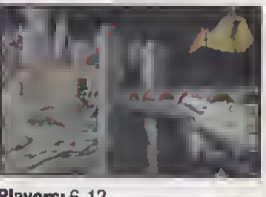
Players: 8-12
Description: Better known as The Ancient Frag Temple, TAFT is a popular deathmatch level. The Domination conversion improves on things, with the layout allowing both offensive and defensive play. Lighting's a bit suspect, though.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **TOWERS OF DOOMINION**



Players: 4-8
Description: Although tagged as a Domination map, the fact that you can see all the other players from most points on the map mixes in a lot of Deathmatch as well. Terrific on small networks, it is without doubt our fave *UT* map.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ **WEST CASTLE**

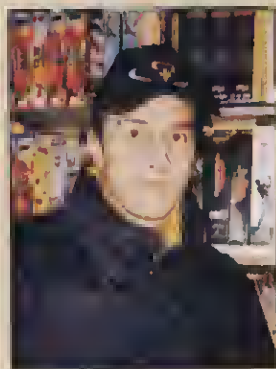


Players: 6-12
Description: With a heady *Unreal* flavour, West Castle provides a mix of tight indoor arenas and big open spaces that make your processor and video card sweat. You'll need a full server to have the most fun, but bots play surprisingly well.
Rating: ★★★★★

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

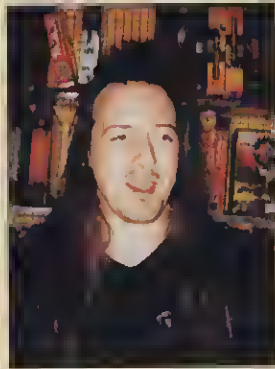
PC ZONE collars a few gamers to see just what's eating into their leisure time

WORDS/PHOTOS Craig Vaughan LOCATION Birmingham, West Midlands



STAVROS AGORASTOS
23, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"Age Of Empires II, Theme Park World, Quake III and Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine."
What are you looking for today?
"The Sims - I've heard it's very good. I'm also after Delta Force 2, because I'm a bit of a control freak."
Have you ever thought about going into politics?
"Now that's a fine idea. Unfortunately, I spend too much time playing games."



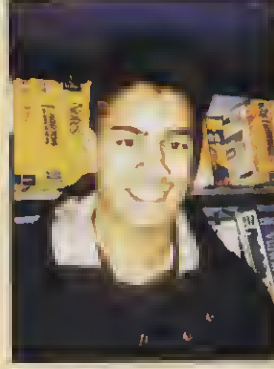
JAMES MCLAREN
29, Post Graduate Student

What's on your hard drive?
"MAME and console emulators like Bleem and Zsnes. I'm also dabbling with Alpha Centauri and Die Hard Trilogy."
Do you like to relive the past?
"Hmmm, new games can be a bit much sometimes, it's nice to go back to when games were a lot simpler and you could get away with only having two hands."
What happens when the nostalgia wears off though?
"The games start looking crap, and I play Quake III."



PAUL ANWARI
19, Operator

What's on your hard drive?
"Flight Sim 2000, TDCA 2 and Carmageddon 2."
Do you have all the accessories to go with them?
"No - I haven't got a yoke or a steering wheel. I tried both, but couldn't get on with either. What can I say, I'm a Luddite - I'm not even hooked up for online gaming."
But there's unmeasured access now...
"Right, I should probably give it a go, then."



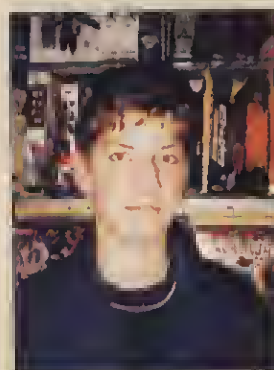
NAEEM ANWARI
20, Electrician

What's on your hard drive?
"Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Indiana Jones, Duke III and Unreal Tournament."
No strategy, no RPG?
"No, I don't have the patience for that sort of thing. I like immediate action, preferably with a large dollop of gore. I also like to slaughter friends in multiplayer."
How nice...
"Well, I'm waiting for ADSL or cable modems in my area, so at least the phone bill won't end in a blood bath."



ELLIOT DANNING
15, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"Wargasm, Kingpin, Aliens Vs Predator and Theme Park World."
What did you think of AvP?
"It was great, until I played the Predator, which was a major disappointment. The Alien's fast and deadly, the Marine's got heavy ordinance, what does the Predator have? Shame - still a class game though."
What are you looking for today?
"Delta Force 2, I've heard it's worth a look and I've got some change burning a hole in my pocket."



RICHARD FREAKLEY
14, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"Age Of Empires II, Lords Of The Realm 2, Half-Life, Aliens Vs Predator, Worms Armageddon, Dungeon Keeper II and Delta Force 2."
What's your favourite?
"Half-Life's just quality. I like AvP, but found it too hard. Dungeon Keeper II is better than the first one, but still a bit repetitive. I don't have a favourite - it depends on my mood. Age Of Empires II is the one that I'm playing most."



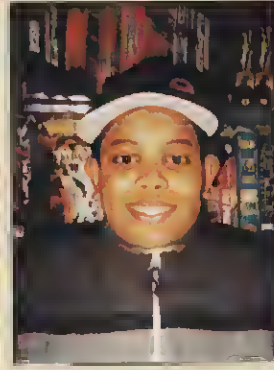
HITEN PATEL
18, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"Civilization I and II, Total Annihilation, Tiberian Sun, Delta Force 2 and Driver."
So what did you make of Tiberian Sun?
"I think it's OK, nothing great and that's the problem. If it had been a game on its own, without all the expectation, I wouldn't have been so bothered, but it was the sequel to Command & Conquer and there were certain things expected of it that it didn't deliver."



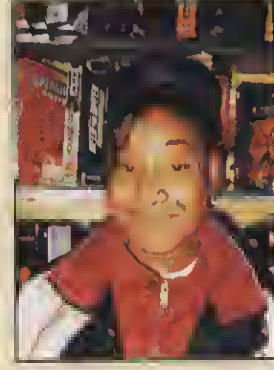
RAPHAEL WAITE
25, Travel Agent

What's on your hard drive?
"Dutcast, System Shock 2 and Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace."
What's on the menu today?
"Well, I'm looking for something for my nephew, Shane. That's what I tell everyone, anyway. The truth is I'm looking for something that I can play too. That's how I got Mysteries Of The Sith. Just don't tell anyone."
You're being quoted...
"Yeah, but who's going to read this?"



SHANE RAFIQ
10, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"Need For Speed III, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Resident Evil 2 and Delta Force 2."
What's your favourite?
"I don't have one, really. As long as I'm active and not sitting around waiting for stuff to happen."
So you don't play adventure games then?
"Nope, my uncle likes them - he buys games he wants to play and pretends they're for me."



SAPHINA RAFIQ
17, Student

What's on your hard drive?
Whatever these two have, I don't really ever get any say in the matter.
That's not very fair.
Well, it wouldn't be if I cared. I actually have plenty of things to do other than sitting in front of a monitor everyday, going blind. I like Lara Croft, though. It really is about time we saw more positive female role models in games.
Like Lula: Virtual Babe?
"Funny."

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

BULLFROG

Are the Bullfrog boys forgotten heroes or just another part of the global machine that is Electronic Arts? Paul Presley returns to Guildford (for the last time) to investigate...

Bullfrog wants to talk. That much is evident. It's been a long time since anyone actually just sat down for a good natter with the Bullfrog gang, partly due to the fact that the EA 'merger' left most of us with the impression that their days of independence were over and partly because with so many high-profile departures over the past two years it was never clear if there was anyone left at all. To rectify this, I've joined Ben Board, one of the main programmers, Andy Nuttall, an associate producer, and Sean Cooper, chief game designer and also one of the original Bullfrog staffers, back when it all started in 1985, for possibly their last interview before the company's mammoth move to EA's rather extravagant new offices in Chertsey - a move that will take Bullfrog out of Guildford for the first time.

Decamping to a nearby pub, their desire to get back in the spotlight again is apparent from the off. We're covering a world of topics before the interview has even officially started. The problems with certain gaming genres for one...

Sean: My problem with any game is that you see a really good one and you have to think about investing some time in it. Often you end up spending weeks playing it solidly.
Ben: We've got quite a lot of EverQuest players in the office who play nothing else all day.
Sean: It's quite hard to control that though, isn't it? When C&C came out in '95, I played it for two years constantly until I'd perfected the tactical art.
PCZ: You certainly sound like a hard man to play games against.

Ben: The Sun-Tzu of gaming.
Sean: I love war.
We all laugh, but Sean seems to have an odd look in his eye. I jot the word 'scary' on my notepad.
Sean: No, I do. I think it's an awesome thing.
Andy: We are talking about 'in games' here, aren't we?
Sean: Well, I also like WWII. It's such a fascinating part of history.
Andy: Have you played Medal Of Honor on the PlayStation? I have and it's quite exciting.
PCZ: It's surprisingly good in some ways...

Ben: Wow, you could fit everything Elvis has ever done onto one MP3 player.
Sean: An Elvis adventure game, that'd be good.
PCZ: It's being done. I was reading this morning that someone's signed up the rights to produce a series of Elvis games.
Sean: (Wide-eyed) No...
Ben: Yeah, that's right. Someone's got the franchise. Can't remember who though.
Sean: Where did you see that?
PCZ: I think it was on Digitiser this morning,

“Hey guys, Bullfrog's not a company - it's a religion. Kumbayah my Lord...”

(PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) PREACHERS SEAN COOPER, BEN BOARD AND ANDY NUTTALL

Ben: I played it for about half an hour and then felt intensely nauseous.
Andy: But you play Quake for God's sake.
The drinks arrive and the conversation moves on to digital recording devices and MP3. Our photographer mentions an MP3 player with 32Gb of storage space. Another of Sean's passions suddenly comes to the fore.
Sean: That'll be amazing. My whole Elvis collection fits in 2Gb.
Andy: Does it? You've got a whole hard drive filled with Elvis?

Channel 4's Teletext service.
Sean: I'm sure Johnny Bravo is Elvis's son.
PCZ: Don't get me started on Cartoon Network cartoons...
Sean: We were watching that in Switzerland once. It was the only channel that was vaguely watchable.
We move on to comparing the early works of Tex Avery to modern cartoons. I'm about to launch into a lengthy diatribe about the merits of I Am Weasel, but decide against it and change the topic. For some reason, we get on to voice recognition programs and the presentation of information on the Internet. Sean



mentions something about it being hard and Ben suddenly has a Beavis & Butthead moment.

Sean: I'm not talking about porn sites. I'm talking about the problems with accessing information online. It isn't easily presented. People think they can just take printed stuff, stick it online and everything will be hunky-dory. The trouble is, if you haven't got a good interface, a search engine or indexing then it's no good. Moving back to porn sites though...

Ben: Moving back to porn sites!

Sean: They do it really well. They're pretty much on the cutting edge of online technology. Have you seen X-Net magazine for instance.

Ben: Is that online?

Sean: No, in the newsagents.

Before joining Bullfrog Andy was 'one of us', a journalist, with a career which included a stint on my old haunting grounds, *The One* (an Amiga title). The conversation moves further into the world of porn, including one American mag's comparison of *BattleMech* robots to prominent US porn stars. Sean mentions an AOL experience in which he was approached by someone looking for advice on setting up a voyeuristic website.

Andy: I used to be on AOL, but I was constantly getting spammed. I sent an email request for help and got three automated responses, all trying to sound human. It was like a Turing test, trying to find out which if any of them were actually human.

I'm sure none of them were. I kept sending emails saying I didn't have a clue what they were talking about and they just kept sending even more useless responses back. It was almost like *Eliza*.

PCZ: "Why do you feel you don't have a clue?"

Ben: "Does saying I want to know about Keywords make you feel happy?"

Andy: "Earlier you mentioned your mother." I remember back on the last few issues of *The One* we interviewed several games industry people using *Eliza*. It was really funny and a quick way of filling some pages. Invariably an *Eliza* conversation gets around to porn at some stage.

Ben: "Earlier you mentioned your penis..."

THE FULL JONTY

Luckily the food arrives at this point, preventing us from exploring this topic any further. Instead, I ask them about the upcoming move away from Guildford to the new campus in Chertsey.

Sean: It does feel like a big deal. There are a lot of people here who are 'Guildford' people through and through. They can practically walk to work at the moment.

Andy: When it was first announced a year ago it was a bit of a shock. We'd been looking at various places to move to, either in Guildford or just south of it - always in this area though.

Sean: Personally I think it'll be an awesome move. We're going to have great facilities there,

and have marketing and PR directly on hand. Ben: It will definitely be quite a shake-up for everybody concerned.

Sean: We'll finally be able to get the whole publishing side of EA involved with the development process. The project managers can become a part of the team rather than having to drive 30-odd miles to take part in a meeting. Usually they end up not making it for one reason or another.

PCZ: Do you really want management taking an active role in the design process though?

Andy: It does sound a bit scary, but I don't think it can do any harm having these people in the same building. It's a bit too hands-off at the moment.

Ben: On a day-to-day level though, if you were going to ask for an office to work in on a nine-to-five basis we couldn't have asked for a nicer place than this. Offices literally do not get better than this.

Andy: It's astounding.

Ben: It's been designed by Sir Norman Foster. There's a great big lake out the front.

Sean: The M25's out the back, though.

Ben: Three-storey high glass doors that roll out in the summer...

Andy: It's a weird structure. Someone flips a button and suddenly it's like *Thunderbirds* as these things roll out. No idea what it's for.

Ben: There's a big open-plan reception area behind





“We all believe that what we’re doing is creative, that we’re producing blinding games with a definite identity. All this talk of Bullfrog being nothing more than a ‘label’ has passed us by. We don’t feel that way at all”

BEN BOARD, SEAN COOPER AND ANDY NUTTALL PREACH THE BULLFROG PHILOSOPHY

(From left to right) Ben Board, programmer; Sean Cooper, chief games designer; and Andy Nuttall, associate producer, take their positions on the Bullfrog pulpit.

◀ it I think. It's got coffee bars, sports bars, big barbecue areas, shops and everything in there.
 PCZ: Shops?
 Ben: Well, an EA merchandise shop. Which is a bit scary I admit. There's also an arcade. It's unreal.
 PCZ: Being so close to EA, do you not worry about Bullfrog losing its identity? Are you the same company of old?
 Ben: You have to realise that the industry has changed along with Bullfrog over the years. The kind of games we produce now, the kind of budgets we have now, the numbers we shift, the size of the industry - EA is a billion dollar company - the sheer size of the operation and the kind of things we're trying to achieve mean that things can't be the same as they used to be. Being a part of EA just means we can share resources with other teams.
 Sean: EA's pay cheques are nicer. Hopefully there's more on them as well.
 Andy: In terms of mindset, I don't feel as though it's any different to when I started. As far as I'm concerned, I still work for Bullfrog and most of us are of the same ilk. We all believe that what we're

doing is creative, that we're producing blinding games with a definite identity. All this talk of Bullfrog being nothing more than a 'label' has kind of passed us by. We don't feel that way at all.
 Sean: It's not like it was when we were at the Surrey Technology Centre, where we were completely separate from EA. We certainly weren't as powerful then as we are now. We've got the technology of EA, the money of EA...
 Ben: That's important.
 Sean: ...the experience and backing of EA and people in charge there really supporting our efforts and pushing us to do things on our own.
 PCZ: So why do you feel that 'nothing more than a label' impression came about?
 Ben: In some ways we set ourselves up for it since there's been no one 'PR-ing' for us. There's been no one there telling people that it hasn't been happening. In the meantime, a lot of people have been going on at length about how terrible it all was because they happened to be in a position where they were changing jobs and hadn't been too happy with the way the company had treated them.

I don't mean to speak ill of anyone you understand. It's just that some of them were more vocal about it than others.
 Andy: It's an easy conclusion to draw when a big corporation takes over a small developer because it's happened so often in the past - a team is swallowed up and never seen again. There was definitely a fear in certain quarters that the same would happen to Bullfrog when EA took over, but it just never happened.
 Ben: It's been entirely above board. They give us the freedom to do what we want. They never ask us to do a product that we haven't suggested.
 PCZ: So why have we seen so many people leaving in the past year or so?
 Ben: Well some people had been there for what, 10 to 11, years? I can well imagine that after that long they'd be up for something new. Another factor is that people are trained by Bullfrog to write really original games. As soon as they feel that, for whatever reason, they're not able to do that, at least they feel empowered enough to go off and do it for themselves, that they're capable of going off and



"Have you heard the one about the games designer..."



"I'll see you outside."

The trusty *Dungeon Keeper* was spawned from the Bullfrog stable.



Bullfrog's Guildford offices before their move to the Sir Norman Foster-designed campus.



A third of the Bullfrog team cram the stairs (the rest are hanging from the ceiling).

doing it better on their own. Mucky Foot is doing well and I was playing the new *Lost Toys* game the other week and that was looking very good.
 Sean: *Urban Chaos* has been a bit of a flop though. Well, at least, the numbers aren't very good. It's an absolutely fantastic quality game though, especially compared to *Syndicate Wars*, their last game for us.

ONWARD GAMING SOLDIERS...

Coffee arrives as the conversation turns towards the need for a Peter Molyneux-style PR figure, ensuring that Bullfrog is constantly in the news and constantly drawing attention.

Ben: I'd like to know how many times the name 'Bullfrog' has appeared in print without the word 'ex' in front of it.

Andy: It's almost like we've become nothing more than a school for programmers.

Ben: If you keep seeing the phrase 'ex-Bullfrog' in magazines you're bound to start leaping to conclusions really.

Andy: These people are often seen as being the

'golden boys' of Bullfrog and the ones that are left behind are almost forgotten.

Sean: They're traitors. They should be shot.

He's joking of course. It is evident that they still have a lot of respect for the departed coders. Most of them are still drinking buddies, and a ten-mile move is hardly likely to change that.

Andy: A good comparison is a rowing boat with oars. You replace the oars, then the seats, then the wooden panelling around the outside, but it's still the same rowing boat.

Sean: (Laughs) We're just adding huge motors to it now. That's the new Bullfrog.

Andy: We're the sum of a million parts and a few of those may leave, but it doesn't take anything away from the whole. New people come in to add to and believe in Bullfrog again.

Ben: I hate this analogy, but the Church Of England is still the Church Of England whether it has a million people or just a few.

Andy: (Bursting with laughter) Don't start going Cliff Richard on us.

PCZ: So, you're comparing yourselves to God?

Ben: Hey man, Bullfrog's not a company - it's a religion. Kumbayah my Lord...

Sean: It would be nice if we were all working together again. I really enjoyed working with those guys - Glenn and Alex Trowers and the rest.

Ben: Well, as far as I'm concerned, those guys have taken little packets of 'Bullfrog seeds' and gone off to other places in Guildford and begun cultivating more games in the same kind of mindset.

Bullfrog is still very much alive. They may have been going through a quiet patch recently, but the attitudes, idealism and passion that existed in the early days is still very much a part of everyone there. Very few software developers have the reputation for loyalty, among both staff and the gaming public, as Bullfrog does. The challenge for Bullfrog now is to convince everyone that the high-profile departures have done nothing to damage its reputation. If the enthusiasm and commitment these three show is anything to go by, it may well have strengthened it. [E]

COMMENT



Poor old *Steve Hill* argues that you young ones should stop complaining as you've never had gaming so good, especially compared to how it was in 'his day'

☛ **A BITTER MAN** Steve Hill

WHINGE, WHINGE, WHINGE...

Moan, moan, moan, it's all I ever hear. "Oh, I don't like that." "Oh, that game wasn't very good." "Blah blah blah blah." You miserable, insipid, ugly, spoilt twats. Why don't you stop your endless whinging and have a think about exactly what you're complaining about? For God's sake, 60 years ago you'd have been sunk up to the nuts in a blood-splattered trench fighting for your lives, as opposed to sat on your bloated arses complaining about the lack of 'muzzle flash' from a pretend gun in a pretend game of war. "Oh look, those soldiers don't move properly." How the hell would you know?

Look at yourselves. You're sat in your own mess, spending hour upon hour pissing money away on an ultimately pointless pursuit, pausing only to watch *Babylon 5* or whatever tiresome nonsense you're into. And even then you probably sit there going "Oh, those spaceships aren't very realistic," blissfully unaware of your own stupidity. There is currently more entertainment available than the human nervous system can cope with, yet still you have the gall to complain about it. Jesus Christ, 50 years ago you'd have been idly whipping a hoop down a cobbled street, waiting for the advent of such incredible innovations as the Pogo Stick and the Space Hopper. As *Coronation Street's* sorely missed Percy Sugden once observed, in his day you'd be happy with a jigsaw, a yo-yo and a bag of nuts.

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...

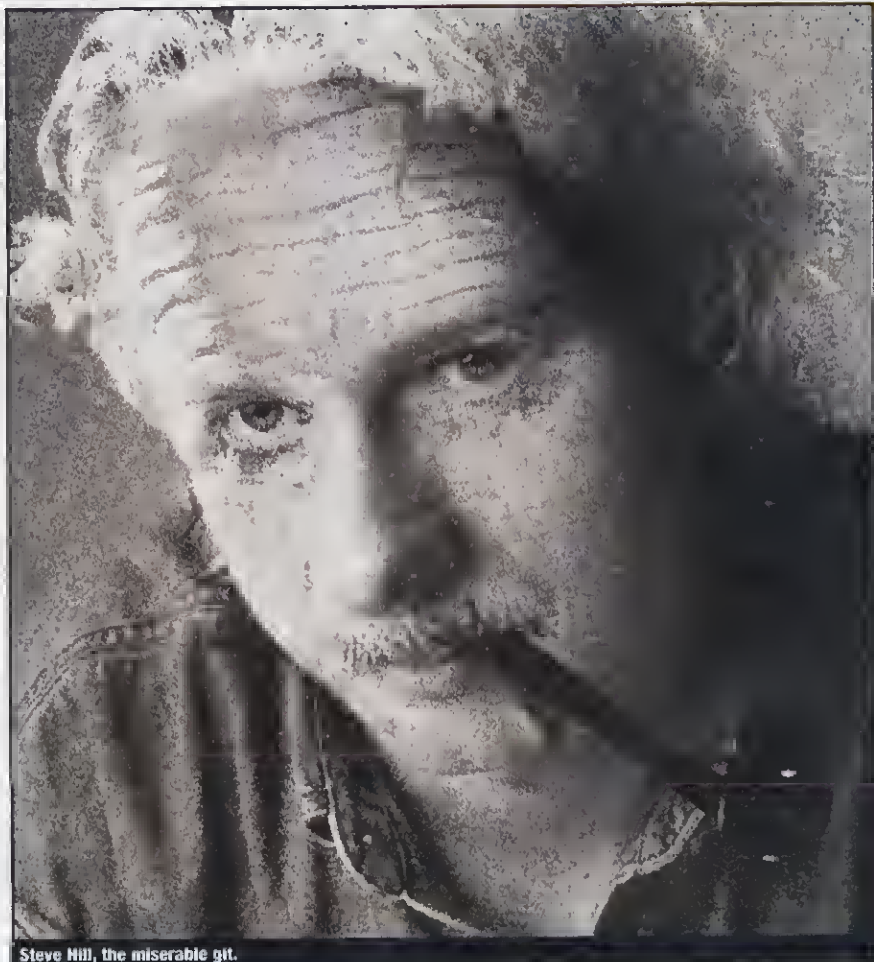
If demographics are to be believed, a sizeable proportion of *PC ZONE's*

readership has lived through at least some part of the '70s. Compared to such austere times, the current opportunities for entertainment are a full-on audio-visual assault. Think about football games, for instance. A football game in 1975 meant sending your poor dotting mother up the stairs with a step-ladder to fetch the Subbuteo out of the loft. It had all the accessories required for that big match atmosphere, the crowd, the dug-out and the floodlights too. But you'd always get palmed off with a headless centre forward and a goalkeeper with no arms. A quarter of a century on and you chimps are complaining that the crowd noise on the latest *FIFA* isn't quite up to scratch, or that there are only 50,000 players in the latest management game.

What about racing games? Back then, a racing game meant crawling around on your knees aimlessly punting matchbox cars around an impromptu track, constructed from household goods. There was one in the gang who had *Scalextric*, and because of that he thought he was better than you. Every day after school you'd go round there to play it, hoping to compete for some kind of championship. But it always took about 15 billion hours to set the track up, and even when you did, the thing never seemed to work. It was a dodgy transformer, a problem that doesn't blight any of the numerous *Grand Prix* titles available, the worst of which is still a world away from the tedium of *Scalextric*.

IS A DUKL A PRAGUE AWAY KIT

And when home computing did eventually ease itself into the public conscience in the early '80s, what did we have?



Steve Hill, the miserable git.

The ZX Spectrum, replete with rubbery keyboard. Luxury. The dawning of a new age of science at the time, but in retrospect, not much cop. So next time you're complaining about loading times, imagine typing in programs with your hands, while squinting at a poorly printed magazine, with one error enough to mess up hours of your life. Try sitting next to a tape recorder for ten minutes only to have the thing crash with a second to go. And when you did get the games to work, they looked liked the primal daubings of a room full of gibbons. Coloured lighting? Real-time shadows? No such thing.

If you can afford to buy computer games on a regular

basis then you've got too much money, it's as simple as that. Talking of which, weren't we all pleased to learn that the *Student Quake* Championship was recently resolved. Christ on a bike, students sat around playing sodding *Quake* all sodding day. While 30 years ago they

much happy. The Internet? It hadn't been invented. Get a wash, you idle soap-dodging slug-a-beds.

In conclusion then, you're all living in a bloody dream world, and if you don't like it then don't do it. You've never had it so good. Mind you, that *Tiberian Sun*...

“A football game in 1975 meant sending your poor mother up the stairs with a step-ladder to fetch the Subbuteo out of the loft”

were starting revolutions, now they're more interested in perfecting a rocket jump. Do you know what we had as students? A measly Amiga. And with 14 hours of *Sensible Soccer* a day we were pretty

Editors note: Well? Are you really going to let him get away with this abuse? Write to me at Mailbox and put monsieur miserable in his place. ☒

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